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The Empress by Minenhle Nkosi

PROLOGUE

“But princess that’s not how it works.” My grandpa said. We were in his study and I was reciting what he taught me about advertising brands.

“Pa we live in modern times. As much as girls in bikinis in beaches sell but sometimes you gotta change the norm or the usual. Come up with something different, fresh and new. For me the bikini models are a turn off shame. Once models appear on screen I change the channel.” I responded.

“How old are you again?” he asked with an amused face.

“Don’t tell me you forgot my age. What a hater you are. Not long ago you hosted a party for me.” I said rolling my eyes.

“No, it’s just that for an eighteen year old you are very wise and mature. Should I die, I will leave all my empires to you knowing

very well that my legacy will be taken care of. I love you princess”

“Pa don’t talk about death please. I don’t know how I would survive if I were to lose you.” I said with a sad expression. My grandpa was more of a parent than my real parents. He was always there for me emotionally, physically and financially. He was even there when I got my first period. I was ashamed to tell him but he just knew what was wrong with me. Him and Thabile my gran, sat me down and gave me ‘the talk’ and I was able to embrace the changes happening in my body. He hugged me and kissed my forehead.

“I love you baby.” “I love you too pa.”

“Adriane please get me my white book, I wanna write this good idea of yours.”

The white book was where he wrote all business ideas and theories. I nodded and stood up, I opened the tinted glass door in his study that led to his private library. The door closed behind me as usual. Only grandpa, gran and I knew the combination or codes to open it because the books in here contained of very important information. I took the book and turned to head out. Just as I was approaching the door I heard

voices on the other side. I stopped to eavesdrop. I was a very sneaky child.

“You knew this day would come Ty. You know that every dog has its day.” Said a voice I couldn’t recognize.

“Pity I ain’t a dog but a beast and from my knowledge beasts don’t die.” Replied my grandpa arrogantly.

“Ow well today the beast dies.” Said the voice again.

After that I heard 3 gunshots and silence after. The door opened and closed. I guess the stranger left. I looked through the glass door and I could see my grandpa sitting on his chair with his head bowed. I quickly punched the codes and the door opened. I rushed to grandpa and shook him. I raised his head and saw that the killer shot him on the head and in the heart. I checked his pulse and found that there was none. I screamed as tears welled down my cheeks. After a while Thabile entered the study with a tray filled with food.

“I knew you guys will stay in here for a long time as usual so I brought you...” her sentence was cut short as she raised her head and saw grandpa. The tray slipped in her hand and fell. Food was scattered all over the place altogether with glasses. She was barefoot but I don’t think glasses had an effect on her at that particular time. She rushed to grandpa and shook him very hard. She was a doctor so she checked his pulse and found

none. She wailed loudly. That was how I lost the most important man in my life and I will never forget that day.

1

That's basically the gangster code. Just be yourself. Just be you, dog. The easiest way to get your card plucked around a gangster is to be a fake. If we feel like you're trying too hard, if you're trying to act like you're from the street, you're in trouble. – Ice T.

General knowledge is most young people turn to gangsterism because they wanna take care of their families, take them out of poverty or they are forced by peer pressure at its best. Then there is me. Remember Ocean's 8, Debbie's speech in the mirror? 'So whatever happens tonight, I want you to remember one thing, you are not doing this for me. You are not doing this for you. Somewhere out there is an eight year old girl lying in bed, dreaming of being a criminal. Let's do this for her.' Well Debbie was talking about me.

Ever since I was 6 years old I wished to be the most powerful, rich and feared criminal worldwide. You may be surprised as to how I wished that while my age mates were playing house and had no care in the world. My grandfather from my mother's side was a mafia king. My parents never knew about this and also he didn't know that I knew about this. Tyler was his name.

They use to call him King Ty. Our relationship was very strong. I used to visit him very often. He would try by all means to keep his dealings private but I was a girl on a mission so I was very much aware of what was happening.

I have a green book which I call the Devil's book. I have had it since I was 7. I wrote all my grandpa's dealings, step by step. His operations, how he deals with traitors, enemies, casualties. I also got hold of his contacts, I was a very sneaky kid. He was originally from Italy but he relocated to South Africa and that's where his life began. He died when I was 18 years old. He left me a huge piece of land, 3 cars

Advertisement

2 houses, his companies (a tech company, a marketing/ advertising company, chain of restaurants and hotels) and his 60% shares in the family law firm Thompson & Partners. You must be thinking: what else did you need because you were set for a lifetime?

I had acquired the money, what was left was the power, the fame and respect from the underworld. My grandpa's criminal business was taken over by his right hand man and I must say I was not happy about the way he did things. I wasn't going to

claim Ty's chair by force but I would claim it by being powerful and respected. When I was 16 I used to visit Thompson Technologies a lot so a hacker by the name of Muriel took me in and introduced me to the world of hacking. After a year I was a pro because I was a fast learner. I made her the CEO of Thompson Tech after Ty's death and I must say she is taking the company to great heights.

Q, short for Qhawe Mhlongo Ty's right-hand man found Ty's killer and later discovered that he was an assassin sent by the Congo mafia king. The aim was to kill Ty and penetrate his operations and take over his territories. However Q's reign made that difficult. They never rested though. They even tried kidnapping Q's daughter to make him handover the crown but he was always 3 steps ahead, so they failed. But they didn't give up. They have been trying for the past 6 years.

Of course my family got jealous of my inheritance, they tried killing me so I went to live with my granny permanently. They were banned from visiting gran. She said if they were to step foot on her property she would gun them down, she is a gangster at heart that one. The only person who is allowed to visit is Anathi, my younger brother who is 20 years old. They haven't poisoned him against me at least but gran Thabile

always makes him drink the truth serum unknowingly so that she can know his intentions.

Thabile is 60 years old. She dated Ty when she was 16 and fell pregnant with mom at 17. I really don't know why they wanted my inheritance because Ty left everyone a few millions in their bank accounts. He drafted his will with gran and she didn't want to benefit anything from it because she is her own woman. She only took the house because that's where they created most memories of their marriage. Gran is kind and she is rich as fuck. She is Mzansi's Oprah.

The name is Oyintando Adriane Chiliza, third child of Nkateko and Thabisa Chiliza. The first born is Cole, he is 28 years and Jenna, and she is 25 years. And me the she devil, I am 24 years old. The rents and siblings live at Midrand but me and Thabile live at Protea Glen. 4 years ago I discovered that the peace of land Ty left me below it is a diamond mine. That for me was a clear indication that he would like me to take over the mafia one day. Cole is the CEO of Thompson & Partners. He also doesn't like me but tolerates me for the sake of peace in the company. He is also a hardcore lawyer.

Jenna works in one of the Thompson hotels as a manager there. I really don't know why she works there because she is lazy and her assistant manager always does things for her but I can't fire her because that will cause more bad blood between us. Thabisa is a housewife while her husband Nkateko is a mechanic.

I have 3 friends whom I also work with; Salizwa who is an assassin and also an accountant, Sange who is a hacker and a programmer, and Seipati who does everything crime related and is also a well recommended private investigator. I am a boss to a gang called Cobras. Every member has a tattoo of cobra on the shoulder. Mine is on my back and my cobra has a crown on its head. My gang is very powerful. I am a silent boss meaning the only people who know me are the ones in the inner circle of the gang. I don't wanna draw attention to myself. Now let's watch and see if I am powerful or capable enough to win back my family's legacy which is King Ty's chair.

2

I am sitting in my office at Club Classic playing chess with Seipati while drinking water. It is 9am. My doctor said I should take it easy on the alcohol so I have been abstaining for a while. I went pretty hard on the bottle after my grandfather died. I almost had a kidney failure but luckily my doctor detected the problem early and treated me. I now own a few clubs because I love power. A call comes through and I answer my phone. It is Kamva, a hacker at Thompson Tech and the vice CEO.

“Boss we have a problem. Someone tried to hack into the company’s main frame and steal the clients’ database.” – Kamva.

“By try you mean they tried but they didn’t succeed right?” I ask calmly. I never show panic or stress when someone presents a problem to me. I am a very calm individual. Most of my crew members are scared of me but they are more scared of my calm persona.

“Yes but the only way to hack into the mainframe is to be inside the premises and only the staff know the system because it is

very complicated. That means someone from the inside must have hacked us.”

“So are there any suspects?” my tone is still the same.

“Not at the moment boss. On the other news Muriel was attacked an hour ago just outside the building and an ambulance rushed her to the hospital.” Clearly this was premeditated and Muriel’s attack was somehow a distraction.

“Are the attackers identifiable on the footage?”

“They were wearing masks boss.”

“What is currently happening in my company at this moment?”

“Nokuthula is deleting the old codes and creating new ones. Until we know who tried the hack no employee will be able to touch the mainframe and access any company database. I am trying to see if there is anything I can identify from Muriel’s

attackers. Maybe a tattoo or a scar from one of them or maybe their physique.”

“Great strategy. Give all the employees a week off beside Nokuthula. Give them all, even the securities. I will be there before the day ends to see if you have something for me. We will talk soon.” I end the call. I wonder who it is that dared me. Whoever it is planned this thoroughly. Hitting Thompson Tech, the base of everything I own. Whoever this culprit is, he or she will regret the day he exited his mother’s womb.

“What’s up?” Seipati brings me back from revenge-ville.

“Some fool dared me. They attacked Muriel and tried hacking into the company’s mainframe. Kamva says it’s an inside man.”

“Wow.” She exhales loudly. Yeah it is very rare that TT gets hacked. Worst of all they involved an innocent employee into this. Sange barges in and immediately pours herself whiskey and takes a sit.

“I guess you already know what happened at TT.” I say taking a sip from my water.

“Yah, some idiot by the name of Kabelo tried hacking the mainframe but I blocked him and everyone who would try after him. Funny fact, he is Bo’s nephew. He is so sexy, before we kill him can I have a piece of him?” Sange is a sex freak, all the guys that date her she dumps them because they can’t keep up with her sex drive.

“Bo never learns neh and never gives up neh? Why would he put his nephew in the lions’ den? Anyways where is he now?” this motherfucker is stupid and is a risk taker, but to play with a fellow family member’s life like this that’s just cruel. I am sure Bo knew the possibilities of KB making it out alive were slim to none yet he sent him in. other uncles out there yoh.

“In my bedroom I mean warehouse.” She says with a smirk. I am pretty sure she is already imagining having sex with KB.

“Have you identified Muriel’s attackers?”

“Nope but as soon as my computer get something I will get a notification in my phone.”

“Seipati what do you think we should do about Kabelo?” she keeps quiet for a moment then speaks up.

“Feed him the truth serum and find out more about what he wanted because it can’t be the database only. Maybe he thought he wouldn’t be caught. Bo never learns. I really don’t know why he set up his own nephew. My gut tells me this also was a divergence and a distraction. He may have almost obtained our clients’ information but he did find something that he was looking for. We just don’t know what it is yet.”
Salizwa barges in.

“He got your net worth, the value of your assets, how many diamonds you produced from your mine, most of your operations information. You are right this was just a divergence.”

“Since when are you a computer person?” Sange asks.

“Never was, never will be.” She shrugs and sits down.

“But guys Bo is Q’s problem. Why is he after you?” Seipati asks with an irritated tone. I know her, when she gets like this all hell may break lose.

“Because he knows that I am after the throne and if he deals with me then Q is just a mere threat. He is a non-factor. He knows that I am the shield to this territory.”

“What are we waiting for? Why don’t we take the throne? We have all the resources we need. Why don’t we dethrone Q?” Salizwa asks.

“All in good time guys. I wanna eliminate Bo before I take on the throne. Next week same day at 9pm we will be heading to Congo. When we get there we will eliminate all things Bo. Even his cat and mouse. I am tired of this old man. He killed my grandpa and like he said every dog has its day, well his has finally arrived.” My phone rings

disturbing me from my monologue, I guess I am famous today. I frown when I see who is calling me but I answer anyways.

“Thabisa how can I help you?”

“Hey my dear. Anathi is missing. Is he there with you?” I remove the phone from my ear and put it on loud speaker.

“No I haven’t seen Anathi since last week.”

“Ow My God. What if something happened to him? He left home yesterday morning and we haven’t heard from him ever since. He is not picking up any of our calls. We thought maybe he is there with you. What if something happened to him?” Sange quickly grabs my laptop and opens it.

“He is not here but if I find him I will tell him to get back to you.” I hang up. “Sange what’s his location?”

“The Thompson family cemetery.” I frown.

I stand up and take my bike keys and head out with them following me. We get on our bikes and ride to the cemetery. 2 cars of my guards are following us. We arrive there after 20 minutes and rush to where the Thompson graves are. We find him lying on Ty's grave in a pool of blood. His hands and feet are cuffed. I quickly check his pulse and find it there but it is faint. I signal the guards to take him and put him in the car. I tell them that we are going to the medic warehouse. We all head there and find a team of doctors already waiting. They attend to him while my friends and I go to my office. I take out bottled water from my mini bar and drink it. I go stand in front of a portrait of Ty sitting on his throne with my hand in my pocket and the other holding the water.

“We are still going after Bo next week?” Seipati asks. She can be very impatient sometimes.

“He will be waiting for us to attack now. Us going there next week will be a surprise.” Salizwa replies.

“I really don't understand that fucker. Why South Africa of all African countries?” Seipati.

“King Ty was one of the wealthiest men in Africa. He really thought after killing him taking over his empire and territory would be as easy as taking a shit.” Sange replies.

“Bo disrespected my grandfather’s resting place. He touched my brother. He is going to pay. Seipati I want all my family members protected like the First family, when I say all I mean all. Salizwa I want Bo’s wife and children dead tomorrow by 5 pm. Sange find the motherfucker that touched my brother and dumped him at Ty’s grave. I also want you to clean all Bo’s bank accounts, even the ones offshore.” I turn to face them and they quickly leave my office. I am not a short tempered person but when I start barking out orders my friends know not to mess with me.

I take my bike keys and drive to the hospital where Muriel has been admitted at, the guards follow me, and in fact they always go where I go. I arrive there and head to her ward. She is not that bad and she is conscious. I find her watching TV. I sit on the chair next to her bed.

“Now that’s a rare site. Muriel watching TV and doing nothing.” She chuckles.

“The attack was a blessing in disguise. I don’t remember the last time I relaxed and watched TV like this. I deserve a holiday.”

“Relaxing is not on our vocabulary. Anyways is there something you can tell me about your attackers?”

“One had a thunder tattoo on his ankle. It’s a very rare tattoo so I think it would be easy to find out who was behind this.”
The thunder tattoo belong to the Mozambican familia. Does that mean Bo has joined forces with them?

“Has your family been notified?”

“Yeah. They are on their way here. I don’t think Bo is the one behind my attack.”

“A few moments after you were admitted here, someone tried to hack into the company’s database. It was Kabelo, Bo’s nephew.”

“You think he planned two attacks on you in one day?”

“Actually 3. Anathi was also attacked and they left him to bleed to death.”

“How is Bo still alive? Why is he even alive?”

“Just as he said to Ty that every dog has its day, well his is very close.”

“What if Bo isn’t the one behind Anathi’s attack? What if there is a new enemy in town?” Muriel is part of the Cobras but doesn’t participate in all the gang’s activities. She is the head of all the tech operations. I scratch my head.

“I never thought about that. Let’s just find his attacker first. So what can you tell me about the Mozambican familia?” I ask her.

“They are one crazy motherfuckers. When one wants to take down a drug-lord or a gang-lord they plead their allegiance to them. They strike like thunder and disappear like lightning. That’s how fast they are... wait a minute, the Mozambicans are the ones behind my attack. They are working with Bo. But they never do such a sloppy job. They kill. How am I still alive?”

“I also don’t know or maybe Bo wanted me to see that he has the Mozambicans on his side and maybe that would make me surrender.”

“How about you set up a meeting with the Mozambicans and find out what ties them to Bo. They may be powerful but we are 10 times powerful and dangerous compared to them. They may have attacked us but there must be a reason why they didn’t kill me.” I stare down a few minutes and finally raise my head.

“I will see what I can do. Speedy recovery.” She smiles and I head out.

I send Thabisa a message that I found her son and send the location where he is at. I then drive home and I find Thabile sitting at the lounge drinking tea and eating cookies while watching the Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. You can never separate gran with reality shows. I sit next to her, take off my boots and fold my legs on the couch. She turns down the volume.

“Who has done what to you? Whom must I kill?” I chuckle, she can be dramatic sometimes but I love her and I wouldn’t trade her for nothing.

“The man that had Pa killed had his nephew hack into TT’s mainframe and steal some of my personal information. He also sent his goons to attack Muriel and Anathi.”

“Oyintando what are you waiting for? Kill this man before he does any further damage. I know you are not scarred of him but this has gone too far.”

“Gran revenge is a dish...”

“Fuck cold Oyintando. Ty has been dead for 6 years. Are you sure the dish ain’t cold enough? Why do you keep procrastinating his demise? Do you want to lose all your loved ones one by one because of him?” I shake my head no. “I am giving you 3 days. If Bo isn’t dead by then, then I will take matters into my own hands.”

“Gran he has ties with the Mozambicans now. I don’t know who deep they are and I don’t know what he promised them. I have to find out that first before I do anything.”

“And you have ties with the Italians and the Mexicans and the Americans. What are Mozambicans compared to that?”

“I hear you gran.”

“By the way the Ndabas sent the letter today.” I clear my throat. Silungile Ndaba is my fiancé. He and I have been dating for 2 years now. He proposed 3 months ago. I do love him and I do wanna marry him but he doesn’t know the real me, the cobra me, the empress me and I don’t think he will want to get married to me once he finds out who I am. He is a biomedical scientist and he usually travels a lot so we don’t spend much time together.

“That’s good to hear.”

“Ntando how long are you going to keep this up? What do you think Silungile will do if he finds out that Ty killed his grandparents? Do you think that he will continue loving you the way he does now? What about your gangster life?”

“We will cross that bridge when we get there gran.” She shakes her head and turns concentrate on the TV. Ty killed Silungile’s grandparents because they stole from him. They both worked at Thompson Advertising and Marketing. They stole about R2 million and grandpa made them choose whether he should kill them or kill their whole families including their kids, grandkids, great-grandkids. Loyalty was everything to him. That’s why he killed the Ndabas. They proved that they weren’t loyal. Anyways I take my phone and head upstairs in my room to take a nap.

3

I am later woken up by a ringing phone. I check who it is and I just let it ring. I don't have time to listen to Nkateko thanking me for finding his son. I am pretty sure he is going to ask many questions about where I found him? Why didn't I take him to a proper hospital? Yada, Yada. I get up and go rinse my mouth in the bathroom. After that I take a quick cold shower and when I am done I wear my navy sweatpants, navy sweater and navy ankle boots. I take my phone, car keys and head to the garage. I drive out with the guards following me as usual. I get to Thompson Tech and head to Kamva's office. I find him busy working with Nokuthula.

"Are we winning?" they turn and look at me.

"We have managed to delete your personal information from their computers and luckily they haven't backed it up yet."
Kamva answers.

"I am almost done with the new codes and I will be making new access cards for every staff member," Nokuthula says.

“Have you managed to identify Muriel’s attackers?” I ask while walking in and sitting on the couch. I cross my legs and lean back on the couch.

“Not yet. Just the thunder tattoo that we saw on one’s ankle. Which is very suspicious because they were all wearing socks except for this one guy.” Kamva states.

“I think they were trying to send a message of some sort or trying to communicate with you boss.” Nokuthula replies with a frown.

“Well whatever message they were trying to send, well done because message received, loud and clear.” I stand up. “When are you leaving?”

“Once we are done here boss.” Nokuthula replies. “We are not rushing anywhere.”

“Just don’t fuck on my couches.” Nokuthula’s eyes pop out. I smile and head out.

I drive to the medic warehouse and find Anathi still unconscious. The doctor handling him tells me that he lost a lot of blood. His father donated for him when he was here earlier on. He will surely gain consciousness but not soon. I sigh and head to the warehouse where Kabelo is kept. I go to my office and sit down on my chair. Sange, Salizwa and Seipati make their way in, they sit down.

“I have found the person who attacked Anathi. He is in there with Kabelo. And I have also cleaned all Bo’s accounts. I only left R100 just for control.” Sange says and I chuckle.

“I have increased security on all your family members. Even on gran.” Seipati says, we all chuckle because if gran were to find out about the new security measures, she will insult us.

“She asked me why Bo is still alive. She said she is giving me 3 days to kill him. If I don’t then she will take matters into her own hands.” They all laugh. Gran is no gangster but her killing methods are brutal. She has a room at home where she stores all lethal chemicals. She always use them to kill.

“I found a way to penetrate Bo’s house. Rest assured that tomorrow by 5 pm his wife and kids will be a thing of the past.” Salizwa says and we all chuckle.

“Let’s go and meet our lucky contestants.” I stand up and head to where Kabelo is at. When his eyes land on me he smirks. Oww I don’t think he will be smirking after I am done with him. “Take our guest to the art gallery room.” I point at Anathi’s attacker. They take him there. The art gallery room is where I place my souvenirs. Like hearts, hands, legs and all the body parts of people I have tortured and killed.

I go to my bar fridge and take out an acid.

“Take off his clothes.” I order and Sange is quick to comply. She takes off all of his clothes and bites her lip when she sees his penis. Lord have mercy on her horny soul. “Make him hard.” She giggles and gives him a hand job. There is nothing nicer than torturing a horny person receiving a hand job, they don’t know whether to pay attention on the chemical harming them or the pleasure they are receiving.

I open the bottle and pour the acid on his toes. He screams out loud and Sange just continue what she is doing with no care in the world. When he is hard Sange stops and steps back. "If you think I am going to ask you questions then you clearly have no idea who you're dealing with."

"You better give us all the information we need lover boy. Who knows maybe we might let you live. I might let you fuck my tight already wet pussy with your big black cock. If you don't talk

boss here will pour the flesh eating chemical on your body and it will give you a slow painful death. The acid is more like a starter neh." Sange says looking at him seductively. This woman loves sex shame. I can't believe she is already wet. When he doesn't talk I pour acid on his upper thighs and he screams louder than before.

"Fine, fine I will talk." He says panting.

"Not yet." Seipati smiles evilly and takes off her belt. She swings it and it lands on Kabelo's upper thighs. He cries out loud and his dick becomes soft. I signal Sange and she gives him the hand job again.

“He has a warehouse in Soweto. That’s where he is hiding. He has ties with the Mozambicans. They are planning on attacking you by Friday. I have a tracker in my body. They already know my current location through it. So they know your current location. Some of uncle’s men are already on their way to your private mine to check if there are still any diamonds left there.” I chuckle. Sange stops when he is hard enough. She turns and looks at me with pleading eyes.

“Just one round boss. I promise I won’t make him cum.” We all laugh. I give up shame. I nod.

“Just make sure you have all the answers I need.” I hand the acid to Seipati. “Don’t kill him yet. Salizwa let’s go.” We head to the art gallery. We find our second guest spooked. You might be wondering why I am not worried about Kabelo’s tracker. The thing is all my warehouses are untraceable. You get 10km closer to them and whatever tracking you were doing just goes to waste. Even the private mine.

“What’s your name?” Salizwa asks?

“Vete al infierno. (Go to hell.)” The guest replies in Spanish.

“Oww I have been there, done that, got burned. Actually hell is overrated.” Salizwa says in a bored tone and rolls her eyes.

“Well since you are nameless I am going to call you Richard. I am going to go ahead and assume that you already know who we are and why you are here.” she goes to him and raises his pants to see if he has the thunder tattoo. It isn’t there but there is a thorn tattoo in his right leg. “Wow, so you are with the Equatoguineans?” she smirks. “Does your boss know that you are siding with our enemies to take us out Richard?”

“Call Sange and tell her to run a facial recognition on him.” I tell Salizwa and head back to my office. 30 minutes later Sange comes in with a file. She places it on my desk.

“I got Bo’s exact location but I am pretty sure he is heavily armed and will be waiting for us. So we will just stick to the original plan of taking out his kids.” She sits down. “The name is Lesley Lofaso, age 33, married to Grace Lofaso. Has 3 children Zuxie who is 10, Pertunia who is 7 and Mischa who is 2. They live in Malabo. He is under the Equatorial Guinea familia but has recently secretly pledged loyalty to the Mozambicans. The Equatoguineans don’t know this and if they find out, he is going to be in big trouble. So I say we hand him over to them.” she leans back on the chair.

“Torture him first and then ship him back to Equatorial Guinea. I want the location of the Mozambican boss ASAP. There are some things I want to discuss with him. There must be a reason why Muriel is still alive and they left evidence in the crime scene.” She nods and heads out.

I take my car keys, phone and drive to my fiancé’s place. I find him cooking and hug him from behind. He chuckles and turns to hug me. We kiss each other and he then plants a soft kiss on my forehead. He takes my left hand, bring it to his mouth and kiss my ring. I just giggle. When I am with him I am just Oyintando the sweet innocent fiancé.

“So your uncles finally sent the letter to gran?” I say as I climb to sit on the kitchen counter. He continues with his cooking.

“Yeah. Is your father going to be present at the negotiations seeing that you guys don’t see eye to eye?”

“I don’t know. I will just let gran speak to him. Maybe he might avail himself.”

“When are we going to get married Ntando?” I scratch my head.

“I don’t know. Maybe in six months.”

“You want a spring wedding?”

“I really don’t care if it’s spring or winter or summer or autumn, as long as I am getting married to the love of my life.” ‘Who doesn’t know the real me’, my inner voice says.

“Aww that’s so cute my love but the season of the wedding is very important to women. Plus it will be your day. I will be there as an extra.” I laugh at him. “Seriously. People usually say the wedding day is all about the bride. The groom is just there for the formalities but the spotlight is on the bride.” I continue laughing. I hate the spotlight.

“It is going to be our wedding so we will be sharing the spotlight and I want a small, simple wedding with 50 to 100 guests. My side of the family isn’t that huge. Most people who will be there are my employees.”

“We should definitely hire a wedding planner seeing that both our jobs are demanding.” I nod.

“My bachelorette party will be in Vegas.” His eyes pop out and I burst out laughing. “OMG you should’ve seen your face. Close your mouth before flies get in.” he chuckles and closes his

mouth. "I am serious though. I will be spending my last days as a free woman in Las Vegas."

"Am I allowed to have a say in that?" I shake my head no.

"Nope honey. Your opinion is invalid." He sulks and pouts.

"When is the food going to be ready?"

"In 5 minutes babe." I nod and climb off the counter.

"I am going to change into something more comfortable." I head to his bedroom.

4

Midnight I am woken up by a beep which indicates a message from my phone. We had dinner with babe and as usual his food was delicious. We talked more about the wedding and other pre-wedding ceremonies. I still didn't tell him about my gangster life. Anyways I don't see the big deal about him not knowing. I will always protect him from the underworld.

The message indicates the Mozambican boss location. I quietly get off the bed and quickly get dress. I get out of the house quietly and drive to the location. I find Salizwa, Seipati and Sange already waiting for me. We jump the fence and find 2 goons at the door. Salizwa quickly takes them out and her gun makes no noise because it has a silencer on.

"There are about 3 men on the other side of the door. 2 in the middle of the room and the boss. I don't think they were expecting us." Sange says while holding her tablet and her gun on the other hand.

"Who expects to be attacked in the middle of the night?" Seipati says and chuckles. Salizwa rolls her eyes. I signal Salizwa to take care of the 3 men and she quickly does so. Sange

accesses the door and it opens. We get inside to where the boss is.

“JJ you called me and I have come. What do you want?” I say. He quickly stands up and his goons draw their guns and they point toward our direction.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you. You have no back up and I have cut your network coverage.” Sange says with a smirk.

“So talk JJ.” I say folding my arms on my chest.

“First I am sorry for attacking your brother and your employee. I had a deal with Bo...” he starts talking.

“We really don’t care about what you did. We just want to know what you want from the boss.” Seipati says.

“For an arrogant bastard you sure are quick to apologize.” Salizwa says.

“I want to work with you. Become partners and...”

“Did you have to involve my brother?”

“I know I was wrong and for that I am...”

“Don’t apologize because you are only wasting your breath.”

“I wanna supply guns to you.”

“Didn’t it occur to you that I already have a supplier for that?”

“More guns at a lesser price. I know your supplier and I know he can’t provide you with what I am offering. And I also know about your diamonds so...”

“Don’t talk about something that you don’t know. The fact that we sell diamonds doesn’t mean we have them or we produce them. Whoever that told you about ‘Empress’s diamonds’ clearly didn’t do his research well.” Seipati says with a voice filled with annoyance.

“If you want to work with me then you better forget about every information you have been told about me, well apart from the one which states what I do to people who betray me

and harm my family. For harming my brother you still are going to pay.” I turn and head out.

I stop at the door and turn to face JJ. “Tell your friend Bo that I am coming for him and I already know where he is hiding.”

I get out and climb into my car. I drive back to Silungile’s house. I get inside and take off my clothes. I snuggle next to him and he wraps his arms around me and plants a kiss in my forehead. “Where were you?” he asks in a deep sleepy voice.

“I went to get a midnight snack.”

“Then why are you so cold?”

“I went outside for a few minutes.”

“Okay, let’s sleep.” I cuddle closer to him.

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The following morning we both take a-not-so-innocent shower. My fiancé knows how to fuck a woman. He satisfies me. We get out of the shower and get dressed. We head downstairs and head to Wimpy to have breakfast. I don’t know how to cook so

that's why we are eating out. I don't know how I will do my wifely duties at the Ndaba homestead because I know for sure that they will want me to cook for them after I get married and they will expect a meal prepared by me every time they visit. We settle down and order our food.

"Please also tell your gran that my family will be bringing lobola and izibizo on the same day."

"You guys are so sure of yourself. What if the negotiations don't go well?" I have so many enemies that if they were to hear that the empress is somehow engaged to wed, they would put a bounty on my fiancé's head.

"Why are you saying that? You don't want them to go well?" he asks with hurt written all over his face.

"No babe. That's not what I am saying. You know sometimes there are conflicts that may lead to the negotiations not coming to an end." Right now I sound like devil's advocate. Maybe I shouldn't have said anything.

"Do you still want to get married to me?"

"Yes I do babe. Forget I said anything. So is your family going to be needing a list?"

“Yeah, as soon as possible.”

“Okay. I will talk to gran and then she will compile it. What will you be wearing on that day?” I ask with a silly smile on my face.

“That my soon-to-be wife will be a surprise.”

“Babes no offence, but your dressing style for special occasion sucks. I can get my stylist to sort you out.”

“But I don’t want you to see my outfit prior.” He says in a small voice. I laugh at him. The waiter brings out food and then leaves. We start eating.

“I will get him to contact you and you guys will set up an appointment. I won’t be there. But please know that you aren’t wearing loafers.”

“But they are comfortable.”

“Wear them and I will send your negotiators back with those gifts.” He continues sulking and I just laugh at him. We finish eating and I settle the bill. He drives me home and then he drives to work. I get inside and find gran eating.

“Was that Silungile?”

“Yes.”

“How far are you with the Bo problem?”

“You gave me 3 days and it hasn’t lapsed yet which means I am handling it.” She rolls her eyes and continue eating. “Anyways the Ndaba family will also be bringing izibizo on the day of lobola. They want to kill 2 birds with one stone. So they need a list of things to buy from you.” She nods.

“We are going to have dinner at your parents’ house so that I can inform them about this. I also called other family members to be there. I will have to draft the list with your mother so that she can specify what she wants from her in laws.”

“What do you want from your in laws gran?”

“A Michael Kors Channing silver dial stainless steel watch and a Bvlgari cocktail clutch.” My jaws drop to the floor. The watch is about R5k and the bag is about R10k. I know she is serious. She won’t change her mind. “For Ty I only want an Octo Finissimo silver watch. Your father will ask for the dramatic long coat, hat and shit.”

“Gran this is too much. Silungile will definitely unengage me.” she laughs.

“You are the only grandchild I get to have a say in their wedding so let me have this in peace mtakabawo.” I laugh at her. Living with Ty has changed her accent. She speaks like an Italian woman. Gran and Ty went to live at Italy after mom was born for about 5 years but I think Ty was running away from something. So gran adapted to the language and their accent. She is very fluent in Italian.

“Assicurati solo che tua figlia e figlio in legge non scrivono cose costose su quella lista. (Just make sure your daughter and son in law don't write expensive things on that list.)”

“Anche la coperta più economica è buona per loro. (Even the cheapest blanket is good for them.)” I laugh again. Once she starts dissing my parents she doesn't stop.

“Vorrei che fosse qui per camminare lunge il corridoio. (I wish he was here to walk me down the aisle.)” She chuckles.

“Don't wish that. If he was still alive you'd be single because he didn't see any man in this lifetime worthy of you. His precious gem.”

We continue talking about Ty. I change my clothes because I was still wearing yesterday's clothes. Later I go visit Muriel. She looks better. She informs me that the doctor is releasing her tomorrow. We talk about few things and then I head to Thompson Tech. I find Kamva and Nokuthula eating and laughing. They update me about the work they have done already. I then head to the medic warehouse. My brother is still unconscious but the doctors inform me that his health is improving.

It has been a long time since I have visited the law firm and the advertising company. So from the warehouse I drive to Thompson Marketing. I always do surprise visits so that I can catch the employees off guard. You must be wondering which qualification I have. Well I only have a Malusi certificate. The money Ty left for me, I invested it. All the money I earned from the companies, I invested it.

I started my hustling from scratch. I teamed up with Sange and together we did heists, robbed banks without even going there. We targeted investments. If we wanted to hijack cars we would hire men to do that. Different men every time. We would hit major towns same day just to create havoc. And we would sell the cars to the Nigerian ganglord. So I didn't go to varsity.

I get to Thompson Marketing and head to the reception. This is a new face. I stand there looking at her. She is busy giggling while scrolling down her phone. She is so fired. I clear my throat and she looks up. Wow that is too much make up for one person.

“Can I help you with something soldier girl?” she is mocking my outfit because I am wearing brown cargo pants, a black vest, black military boots and a biker jacket topped with a bucket hat. I just chuckle.

“The name is Adriane Thompson not soldier girl.” My gran changed my surname after the inheritance saga with my parents and siblings. She said my father is not worthy to have me be called by his last name because he is just a weakling who chose to listen to a woman instead of protecting his own child. Gran is convinced that Thabisa is the one who call the shots in the Chiliza homestead and she is not wrong. Thabisa wants things to be done her way all the time. Anyways back to the doll in front of me

she nearly drops her phone when I mention my name. I guess she has finally put a face to the name.

“OMG, I...”

“Save your breath honey. You might need it on your next interview.” I leave her with her mouth wide open and head towards the elevator. I get to the first floor which is the advertising department. I just stand outside the elevator and watch them working. Some are really working, some are just chatting, some are busy with their cellphones, and one is sleeping. I just chuckle and shake my head. I step forward and all of the sudden they stop what they are doing and turn their attention to me.

“Don’t mind me. Continue with what you were doing. Just bear in mind that there are cameras on this floor. If you haven’t been doing your job well, expect a written warning by the end of tomorrow.” I turn and head back to the elevator. I get to the second floor which is the marketing department. They are doing exactly what the advertising department was doing, not doing their jobs.

“I can see that some of you don’t like working here. That is determined by how you do your jobs. There are cameras on this floor. I am going to look into them this afternoon. If you have been doing what you guys were doing when I walked in, then

expect a written warning by the end of tomorrow. And I am not bluffing.” I head to the management floor which is the third floor. These idiots are eating at the boardroom and making noise. Lunch break ended an hour ago. I should just fire one of them to make an example. I clear my throat and look at them with a hard face.

“I should just fire one of you as an example. You have turned my company into a circus. The employees are doing as they please. You went and hired a Barbie wanna be as a receptionist. Really?”

“We are sorry Miss Thompson. This will never happen again.” One of them says.

“You are right it won’t. I am demoting all your asses with immediate effect and you are going back to your offices downstairs. Kalu you are going to be the acting CEO while I am looking for a permanent CEO. The only person whom I won’t be for now demoting is Miss Mdinga but should the financial report that you are about to give me not satisfy me, consider yourself unemployed. I will be in my office for the next 30 minutes.”

I head to my office. It's clean. I hired a lady to clean it every day. She only comes in to clean my office at the morning and evening and then leaves. I sit on my chair and take out my phone. I have missed calls from my crew. Wonder what they want. I write message to Salizwa that she must come and check the financial report for me. I remember something and then I quickly rush to the advertising department. They seem busy doing what they are paid for.

“Do you have any big projects you are working on?”

“Yes we were approached by Herbalife Nutrition to do an ad for them which will be shown on TV and on all other social media platforms.” A new face says. The management is shitting on me. Busy hiring new staff and not informing me about it. Maybe I should fire them because it seems like they undermine me.

“What is the ad about?”

“Human health, diet and nutrition.”

“I am going to come here tomorrow morning and I expect someone to pitch this ad to me. Is there another one?”

“Revlon asked us to make an ad about their new shampoos.”

“Avoid shading women’s natural hair. I am also expecting you to pitch that ad tomorrow.” I head back to my office. I decide that I will go to Thompson & Partners tomorrow because I am already tired. 20 minutes late Miss Mdinga enters my office with a file in her hand.

“I hope that this report will satisfy you boss.” She places the file on my desk and turns to leave.

“Mdinga why are you and your colleagues undermining me and my authority?” she turns to look at me but doesn’t answer. “Go and call the whole management team. I need them here within 2 minutes.” She rushes out and comes back with them. They are 4 men and 3 ladies.

“I know that I am young and all but I don’t like what is happening in this company. You guys hire new people and don’t care to introduce them to me or inform me as the owner of this company. Today I was insulted by your new plastic receptionist. I know that one of you is sleeping with her. Find a more suitable candidate within the end of tomorrow or I will discover whose mistress is it and just go to the press with that information.”

“We are so sorry Miss Thompson. As the head of HR I failed to inform you about the new staff members. I take full responsibility for that and I am sorry.” I look at her and look at the others. Some of them look like they are about to pass out.

“I won’t demote you or hire a new CEO but I am expecting Mr. Mlungwana as the head of HR to issue written warnings to all of you, herself included and all of the employees in this company. As for the Barbie I want her gone now. Meeting dismissed.” They all rush out with their tails between their legs. Salizwa gets in with an amused look on her face.

“Only you can make old men and women look remorseful and defeated without lifting your hand.” I chuckle, she sits down and I hand her the file. “I will give you feedback tomorrow, midday latest.”

“You done with your assignment?”

“Yes. If you had answered your phone earlier on, you would have known. Bo is breathing fire and he is on his way home. Sange implanted a seed of doubt in his man by revealing his bank accounts’ balance. Some of them dropped him.” I chuckle.

“After burying his family I need you to abduct him. I will torture him until he wishes that his mother and his father used a condom. I want you to capture him right after he leaves the cemetery after burying his family.”

“Man that’s cold.” I laugh. He killed the wrong man and now his time has come for him to pay.

5

Jenna: “why is it any of our problem that she is getting married? She should hire people to negotiate for her since she has all the money in the world.” I just chuckle and shake my head. Gran had broken the news about my lobola negotiations after dinner. The family is gathered at the lounge.

Thabisa: “when did you start dating this man?”

Gran: “if you were an active mother in her life, you would’ve known the answer to that question.” Yoh I felt that.

Aunt Sabathile (Nkateko’s sister): “when exactly is the Ndaba family coming?”

Gran: “in 3 weeks.”

Uncle Siyazi (Nkateko’s brother): “are they going to negotiate at your place or here?” he says looking at gran.

Gran: “if Nkateko is not comfortable with hosting the negotiations here I guess they will happen at my house.”

Uncle Siyazi: “so what is your say in this brother?”

Nkateko: “I have no problem with the negotiations being held here. It’s the least I can do for my daughter.” I chuckle and shake my head. Daughter huh?

Gran: “they are also going to bring izibizo so we must compile a list.”

Jenna: “are you sure granny that she is ready for marriage? She is young and entitled and power hungry. I am sure she doesn’t even know how to do house chores. She is going to drag our name in the mud at the Ndaba homestead. When she finally learns the importance of family, maybe then she should consider being in a serious relationship.”

Me: “not long ago you wanted to kill me with your family because of my inheritance. Now you wanna teach me lessons on the importance of family? Wow.” I stand up. “Gran you will update me on how this meeting ended. I have better things to do than sit here and be insulted.”

Nkateko: “please sit down Oyintando.” I look at him and he looks at me with pleading eyes. Is he really kissing my ass? I sit down.

Gran: “Nkateko, Siyazi and Londani will negotiate on Adriane’s behalf. You can also tell the whole Shabangu family. Thabisa you will take care of the invites or should i?”

Thabisa: “we can just take care of them together.” Gran nods.

Gran: “ladies let’s go to the kitchen to compile the list and leave the gentlemen to discuss a few things.” We stand up and head to the kitchen. I take a glass from cardboard and fill it with tap water. I take a sip while watching them compile the list.

Jenna: “are we boring you?” I just roll my eyes.

Me: “I know you hate me. Just go and paint your nails or something.”

Thabisa: “girls stop fighting.”

Jenna: “she is the one who is not cooperating. This is her ceremony, not ours. She should be more active.”

Thabisa: “you know very well that your sister is a woman of few words. Cut her some slacks.” My parents are being weird today, they are standing up for me. They must be up to something.
The ladies finish compiling the list.

Gran: “Adriane will come here two days before the big day to prepare everything. I will come with her to oversee everything. We will also hire a catering company. You don’t have to do anything.”

Jenna: “that’s good to hear.”

Gran: “thank you for having us for dinner. We will be on our way now.”

Thabisa: “go well.”

We say goodbye to the men and then we leave. We arrive home and find Dominique

our butler, in the dining room laying out dinner.

Gran: “I hardly ate there because I was afraid of being poisoned.” I laugh at her as we sit on the dinner table.

Me: “Thabisa and Nkateko were acting weird today. They were nice. They scared me.”

Gran: “those two are conniving snakes. We shouldn’t trust them.” I chuckle.

Me: “what kind of a mother that doesn’t trust her own daughter?”

Gran: “what kind of a mother that plans to kill her daughter because of inheritance?”

Me: “okay you win.”

Gran: “as always.” I roll my eyes.

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Sange: “he cremated his family this morning and he is planning on moving to India tonight.” I laugh and shake my head. It is the following day and Sange is updating me about Bo. We were at my apartment which is at Randburg.

Salizwa: “such cowardice. What do we do boss?”

Me: “grab him before he boards his plane. How many men are guarding him?”

Sange: “10 men. 5 of them are leaving with him.”

Me: “take all of them out. Even the ones staying behind. Just end Bo’s reign for good.”

Seipati: “it’s about time.”

Me: “what did the Equatoguineans say about Lesley?”

Salizwa: “they killed him and hanged him in public and branded BETRAYER on his forehead.”

Sange: “that’s how they roll.” I turn to Salizwa.

Me: “did you find any loopholes on the financial report?”

Salizwa: “yes. They moved the money so well that if I was an amateur u wasn’t going to notice.” I frown.

Me: “how much money did they steal?”

Salizwa: “about R3.5m this year.”

Seipati: “damn. How stupid are they?”

Me: “who are involved in this?”

Sange: “Miss Mdinga, Mr. Mlungwana and Caleb Sefoloko.” I clench my jaws. These motherfuckers are shitting me.

Me: “let them fool me again this week. Next week we are having a year-end party. I will include the police in this. I want to humiliate them because they have made me a fool. I will make sure that they don’t get bail.”

Seipati: “I need a show stopping dress for that event. A dramatic one. A Durban July dress.” We laugh at her.

Sange: "I want that huge dramatic Durban July hat that will cover most of my face." We continue laughing.

Salizwa: "they will literally never see you coming."

Me: "that reminds me. I should go. Today I am checking up on the law firm."

Sange: "good luck with that diva brother of yours."

Seipati: "you are only calling him a diva because he is one of the few men in Mzansi whom you haven't slept with." Sange rolls her eyes. If it was someone else, they would've been offended, but not her.

Salizwa: "what would you do if you find out that Cole is also stealing from you?"

Me: "is he?" Salizwa: "I don't know."

Me: "if he is, then I'd let gran handle him. There is a presentation at the advertising company later on. You guys should come."

Sange: "I will definitely come. And I will make sure I come." We burst out laughing because the first come and the second come contains different meanings.

Salizwa: "you need serious prayer and holy Ghost intervention."

6

I arrive at the firm. At least there isn't a new receptionist here. I get to the elevator and head to the floor where candidate attorneys are at. Every year we hire about 5 candidate attorneys and if they are lucky they all get hired permanently. I get to their floor and find them busy working. This is what I want to see when I arrive at my company. Seeing people doing what they are paid for makes me happy. I just look at them for the last time and then head to the elevator. I head to the boardroom because I know for sure that there is a client with one of the advocates there. I find Advocate Stemmer with 2 young gentlemen. She smiles and stands up as soon as she acknowledges my presence.

"Miss Thompson." She shakes my hand. "What a pleasant surprise."

"Advocate Stemmer. I was in the neighborhood so I thought why not stop by and say hi. Can I join you for this meeting?"

"Of course. Please sit." I sit down and open the bottled water in front of me. I drink and then place it down.

"So what is the meeting about?"

“This is a private consultation miss. We don’t care if you are the boss’s daughter. We don’t need you here.” one of the guys speak in an annoyed tone. I just chuckle and shake my head.

“Mr. Chansa, this is Miss Thompson, the owner of this company. She usually sits in in some of the meetings.” Advocate Stemmer responds. “Anyways boss lady, Mr. Sisonke Chansa is being emotionally and physically abused by his girlfriend. She is currently in police custody because the last time she beat him up, he landed in the hospital. They want her to rot in jail, they just don’t have enough proof yet. Just his word against hers.”

“What is the name of your Sasha Banks?” I ask in an amused tone.

“Don’t make fun of my brother. Women like you annoy me.” The brother replies. The victim’s head is bowed down. I look at the brother with my intense soul penetrating look.

“Next time you talk to me with that tone, you will regret it.” I say in a calm tone but I see the brother shifting uncomfortably. I smirk and look at Sisonke. “What is the name of your Sasha Banks?”

“Her name is Ntsakisi Lekgwathi.” Sisonke answers in a low tone. I just burst out laughing and they all look at me like I am crazy. I continue laughing until I calm down.

“Damn I don’t know when was the last time I laughed like that.” I take a sip of the bottled water. “How long have you guys been dating?” Sisonke clears his throat and looks at me.

“19 months.”

“And how long has the abuse been happening?”

“For 10 months.”

“Why did you stay with her if she was abusing you? For a whole 10 months?”

“I love her and I thought she will change. And this one time she threatened to kill me if I dump or leave her.”

“Why the hell didn’t you tell me that Sonke?” the brother asks clearly getting angry.

“I really thought she had changed. Kisi was my friend. We met on the streets. She is abusive in nature. She gets off with inflicting pain to men. It makes her feel good about herself. She started doing this in High School. Most of her ex-boyfriends were afraid to come out because they were scared how people will treat them after they find out that they were abused by a woman.”

“Did she ever tell you the reason why she is abusive?” Sonke asks.

“She has anger issues but there isn’t a reason for them. She doesn’t come from an abusive background. She just has a bad temper. If you need some people who will testify then I can get you some of her boyfriends. If she was a lesbian, there would be her own record of women killed by their partners because unlike men, women can’t defend them sometimes.”

“Has she ever,” Sonke asks but I can see that she is scared the finish the question, “Has she ever killed a man before?” I sigh.

“She has. She abused him and when he had enough he left. Like packed all his things and moved into a new city. He found a new girlfriend

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they were in love and eventually he impregnated that girl. Kisi found him when his girlfriend was 6 months pregnant. She didn't do anything to the girlfriend but she strangled him to death in the presence of the girlfriend. The girlfriend miscarried that night. She was taken to a hospital and to there she was taken to a mental institution because she was a danger to herself and other people. Kisi buried his body in a site and built a house on top of it, so unless you demolish the house and dig him up, you won't have enough proof.”

“She sounds like a man, Ntsakisi, she sounds like a man.” I look down contemplating whether I should tell them Ntsakisi's secret or not. She confided in me and I don't see a reason to reveal this information. However I don't want my firm to lose a case so I have to give them something.

“The woman's name is Akhona Mazibuko. She is at Akeso Umhlanga. I don't know if a testimony of a person who is in a mental institution will be taken into consideration but you can

try. Also there is this guy Vhutshilo Netshiozwi. He is in a wheel chair because of Kisi. He also dumped her and she ran him over with her car.” I stand up. “Anyways I have said a lot. Take the information I have given you and put it into good use. Try keeping her behind bars for at least 5 years but know that when she comes back, she is coming for you. The only way to stop her is to put a bullet in between her eyes.”

I get out of the boardroom and head to Cole’s office. I don’t owe him anything but I feel like greeting him. I get to his door which is slightly opened. I find a sight that amuses me, Cole banging his PA from behind. I just stand there and slowly clap my hands. They both freeze and turn to me. I laugh.

“The perfect prince isn’t so perfect after all. Wonder what your wife will say when she hears about your shenanigans. Wonder if your parents know what you do behind closed doors. But don’t worry, I am not a woman like you, I don’t talk about things that don’t concern me. I am out of here.” I get out leaving them both still shocked and frozen on the spot.

I go to the CFO and ask for financial report. He asks to send it via email and I tell him that should I not receive it in 20 minutes then we will have a problem.

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Sindi finishes pitching the Revlon idea and sits down. Hlumelo is the one who did the Herbalife pitch and Sange made him uncomfortable the whole time by giving him bedroom eyes. I don't know what to do anymore. The whole staff is here. Even the management.

"I am not happy with the Herbalife and if I was a consumer I wouldn't even look at it twice. I will just be annoyed by it the first time. I wouldn't even consider buying a single product. Your ad is basically attacking chubby women. Try coming with a different approach." I say and sit back on my chair.

"If I were a chubby women I would also feel attacked. Not all women who are chubby wants to lose weight. We live in a different era. Women are getting comfortable with their bodies, whether they are chubby or petite. Your ad make it seem as if they are not human enough because they are fat. And the petite women are also not human enough because

they are skinny. Try a new approach. Appreciate women and men of all sizes. When advertising you must be careful with your wording. Watch the phrases you say. They may be catchy on some people but to others it would rub off the wrong way.” Sange says and I nod.

“But I must say you got me on the shampoo idea. I even thought about standing up and rushing to buy it at the store.” Salizwa says and everyone chuckles and some laugh. “The client will surely be happy about this.”

“It is not our problem that this may rub off the wrong way on some people. What we must know is that not everyone would love a product or be willing to buy it. We should just focus on our intended target market.” says the guy who was presenting the Herbalife ad. I just chuckle shaking my head.

“If you continue with this attitude of yours, you will find yourself unemployed. You are being ignorant and that might cost me my reputation. What you should be doing is taking notes and not giving me this stinking attitude.” I click my tongue looking at her. “I am hoping to see everyone on the year-end party. I am very impressed by the company’s

management that I am rewarding them with something special.” I smile and in turn I receive surprised smiles from the management. I stand up. “Meeting adjourned.” I exit the room with my friends following me.

“They got Bo.” Seipati says with a sinister look.

“Let the games begin.” Salizwa says and whistles not giving a damn about the workers on the corridor.

I wake up the following morning and get ready for the day ahead. I head downstairs with my bag. I find gran in the kitchen drinking coffee while reading the newspaper. I kiss her cheek and prepare my own coffee.

“Morning gran.”

“Morning Adriane.”

“I have Bo in one of my warehouses but I am not going to kill him yet. I need to teach him a thing or two about the Thompsons.” That grabs her attention because she drops the newspaper and looks at me. She studies my face and my movements carefully.

“I want to be the one who ends him. He took away my happiness. Let me take his life. I want closure and I also want to move on and get laid. It’s been so long since I got laid I have even forgot how it feels like to be kissed.” I burst out laughing. This woman. She wants me to allow him to kill Ty’s enemy and at the same time she is talking about sex. It’s very disturbing.

“I will grant your wish gran. If you want some action you should befriend Sange. She will hook you up but please do it elsewhere not in our home. I don’t wanna be traumatized for life.” She laughs and continues drinking her coffee.

“I won’t. I am pretty sure Ty’s ghost will haunt me should I bring a man over.” We both laugh.

“Are you going somewhere today?”

“I wanna see my grandson first then I have a lunch date with Nkateko’s mother.” I look at her.

“What does she want?”

“I don’t know. But I will find out soon.”

“Since I am also going to see Anathi, let’s go together.” We drinking coffee and head out. “Can I take you out for breakfast?” she chuckles and nods. We get into my car and the driver drives out followed by bodyguards.

We get to the medic warehouse and go to Anathi’s ward. He is sleeping but he is not wearing the face mask so that’s a relief. We get inside and after a minute, a doctor gets in.

“Morning boss. You will be relieved to know that your brother woke up this morning. That’s why we removed the mask. He is recovering well. He will be out of this place soon. You can wake him up if you want.” She smiles and head out. We sit down on the couch with gran. Anathi groans and gran rushes to his bed. She holds his hand.

“Hey monkey, granny is here. How are you?” he clears his throat.

“I am fine granny, although my ribs hurt.”

“You are going to be fine. Are you hungry?” he chuckles.

“You know I am always hungry granny.” I stand up and go stand near gran.

“Hey Anna.” He chuckles.

“When will you stop calling me that?”

“When you get married.” I say and he laughs. “Don’t laugh, you are going to hurt yourself.”

“Adriane is right, take it easy monkey.”

“Let me ask Sange to buy food for you.” I take out my phone and text her. We stay for a while and Sange gets in with a KFC Paper bag.

“And you wonder why I love you so much Sange.” Anathi says while trying to sit up and we laugh at him. I help him sit up and hand him the food.

“How are you lover boy?” Sange asks and winks at Anathi. Anathi has had this silly crush on Sange for a very long time. Right now he is blushing like crazy.

“How about we leave you two alone and go to our date?” I say heading to the door. Gran says goodbye and we both head out.

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“Hhe phela we gogo I saw Cole shagging his PA at his office yesterday.” Gran splits her juice and laughs out loud.

“The perfect prince isn’t so perfect after all.”

“That’s what I said.” We both laugh out loud. Great minds think alike.

“I wonder how your father and your mother would feel if they hear about their son’s shenanigans.”

“I wonder what his wife would say. Pity we are just going to sit and watch when the drama unfolds because secrets have their way of coming out.” I sip on my juice.

“One day you will have to practice what you preach.” I roll my eyes. “Roll them all you want but you know I am telling the truth. You won’t be fully happy until there is transparency in your relationship.”

“Whatever gran.” I eat my burger.

“The truth always sets you free. You saw how my relationship with Ty was. We were so happy because I knew him. All of him, the good, the bad and the ugly. This is the last time I am talking about this. You won’t be happy with Silungile my love. Be honest with him before tying the knot. If he can’t accept you for who you are, then he doesn’t deserve you.”

“What if he snitches on me gran?”

“Then you do what you always with snitches and betrayers.”

“I don’t think I’d be able to kill him gran. I love him too much.”
She rolls her eyes.

“Whoever told gangsters that it’s okay to fall in love was misleading you. It’s a weakness.” It’s my turn to roll my eyes again.

“Let’s stop talking about this. These walls have ears.”

“Overrated.” I laugh at her.

“Okay, let’s say he doesn’t snitch on me. What if he decides that he wants nothing to do with me? He dumps me and then leaves the country for good. What will I do? There is just too much at stake here gran. My heart is at stake.”

“Oww please. You’re 24, you are still young. Should he dump you, you will find another man who will love and appreciate you for who you truly are.”

“I don’t know gran. I really don’t know.”

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I am sitting in my office at Club Classic when the door opens and Cole comes in. I just laugh out loud. He sits on the chair opposite me and I finally stop laughing and chuckle.

“Ntandokazi.”

“Big bro.”

“I am sorry.” I look at him with a shocked look. My brother has always been proud. Even when we were close, when I still stayed with my parents, he has never said he is sorry. Instead he would just do something to show that he is sorry and he is remorseful. But the words ‘I am sorry’ has never left his mouth.

“What are you sorry for brother?” in all my life, I have never called him by his name. He may have betrayed me but I will always respect him and I will never call him by his name in his presence.

“For betraying you and plotting against you.” I chuckle.

“Are you saying this because you don’t want me to spill the beans about your affair?” he chuckles and shakes his head.

“It has been so long since we chilled and talked

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so there is so much you don’t know about me anymore.”

“Yeah? Like what?” I challenge him.

“You may be a gangster Ntandokazi but there are some things that you will never be aware of.”

“Like what?”

“Like the fact that my wife cheated on me with Aphiwe.”
Aphiwe is our cousin. My eyes pop out. Aphiwe is gay, or bisexual apparently. He laughs bitterly. “I am less of a man. My wife chose a gay man over me. The thing with my PA started as a way of comforting myself and fucking her however I wanted. Then I fell for her. I mean have you seen her? She is beautiful, smart, and intelligent and has a good heart. She also loves me.”
he is venting out to me. I don’t know when the last time we talked like siblings was.

“Why don’t you divorce your wife and marry your PA?” he sighs heavily and bows his head.

“When I was 18, I had a threesome with her and a girl named Babusisiwe. By then I wasn’t dating Shamma, we just knew each other. Shamma and Babusisiwe were friends. They taped the whole thing. Babusisiwe had a crush on me. She used the tape to blackmail me into getting into a relationship with her. Remember I had anger issues back then. One time we all went to a trip to the woods, a camping trip. My friends got lost that they ended up in another camping site. Babusisiwe continued blackmailing me and I lost it and beat her up until she stopped breathing. We threw her in the river, with Shamma. Shamma

and I happened but there was no blackmailing involved.” He breathes out loud.

“My relationship with Shamma got serious. We eventually got kids and got married. She have never mentioned the incident until recently. I told her that I want divorce and custody for my kids. She blackmailed me. She said what happened with her and Aphiwe was a moment of weakness. Then one day she was drunk, she told me that my performance in bed is poor and that I have...” he couldn’t finish his sentence because tears just choked him and rolled down his cheeks. I quickly rush to him and hug him tightly.

“She is going to pay brother. She will pay dearly for what she has done to you.” He shakes his head and breaks our hug.

“I don’t want you getting involved Ntandokazi. This is my battle not yours. I just wanted you to know that my cheating is justified. Back to why I am here, I want us to renew our relationship. I miss you and my life has been so empty without you.” I get back to my seat.

“What makes you think that I will believe you just like that?”

“I am hoping that you will see that my intentions are pure.”

“You also want a relationship with gran?” he laughs.

“That would also be awesome. She is a breath of fresh air and she is the realest, after you of course. You may think that me and the rents have a plan up in our sleeves because we are suddenly nice towards you. The thing is, besides the fact that we were stupid for letting the love for money cloud our judgment, you are the best thing that has ever happened to our family. I miss my sister and the rents miss their daughter because let’s face it, Jenna is just, well Jenna.” I laugh because he is right, Jenna is, and well there is no correct word to explain how she is.

“Why now?”

“Life is too short. Family is everything.” I exhale out loud and look at him. I will have to feed him the truth serum next time we meet but I also miss him. He stands up. “Can I take you out for dinner any day this week?”

“I will let you know when I am free.” He nods and heads out.

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I arrived home and told gran about my meeting with Cole. She said he sounded genuine and if he passes the truth serum, she will help him take care of his Shamma problem. I laughed at the way she put it in because she made it seem as if it's as easy as ABC. I know if Shamma doesn't abide with any of gran's rules, gran might kill her and raise her kids without remorse. That's how ruthless she can be sometimes. Gran is not an irrational person. She doesn't regret her actions because she thinks intensely before taking action. She thinks about the pros and cons of her action. She makes calculated moves every time and if she were a gang leader, her gang would rule above all other gangs.

I shower and wear black leather mini skirt, long sleeved t-shirt, black Hibacci sneakers and a black cap. I take my car keys, phones, guns and head out. I get on my bike and drive straight to the warehouse where Bo is kept. I get there and find Sange chatting with Mellow, a member of the gang. I just greet them then head to Bo's room. I get inside and find him sleeping while tied to a chair.

“Beast, get me cold water.” Beast who is in charge of security rushes out and comes back with the bucket full of cold water. I take it and pour it at Bo. He wakes up gasping for air. “Hi.” I smile.

“You got what you wanted, to destroy me and kill my family. You have won, just end my miserable life already.” I chuckle shaking my head.

“I was expecting a ‘how are you doing today empress?’ or a ‘good evening your majesty.’ You are always disappointing Bo. Now let’s play a game. You answer the questions correctly, I will extend your days on earth. How’s that?” he doesn’t answer. “Your silence means you agree and you understand. Beast get me my chair.”

“Sure boss.” He leaves and comes back with the chair and places it in front of Bo.

“Thank you.” I take a seat and stare at Bo straight in the eyes. He holds my gaze and doesn’t back down. “How long have you been a gangster?” he chuckles. “Bo I was serious, one correct

earns you another day on earth. Another day to plan an escape and my doom. I'd take the shot if I were you."

"I have been a gangster for 58 years."

"When you first started, what did you specialize in?"

"Drugs trafficking, women abduction, hijacking."

"Did you ever rape any of the women you abducted?"

"Some of them." I nod.

"Did you have any relationship with King Ty?" he clears his throat.

"Yes. We were once friends."

"What happened?"

"A deal went south and I threatened to harm his wife. He ended our friendship and we have been enemies since, until of course the time when he passed on

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but I am pretty sure he considers me as an enemy in the afterlife."

“Do you regret killing him?”

“Yes. Because I wanted to do human trafficking in his territory and he didn’t want to get into business with me. Even when he was dead, Q followed in his footsteps.”

“What were you expecting? Human trafficking is a serious thing. Diamonds, gun smuggling and money laundering is better because it doesn’t include playing God with someone’s life.”

“Slavery isn’t something new. It has been happening since the beginning of time. There is no surprise there. There are also gangs here in South Africa who participate in it.”

“But not in Ty’s territory. They know the consequences of their actions. So tell me, why did you risk with you nephew’s life?”

“It was a mistake. He volunteered, it was supposed to be quick but I guess we underestimated your computer system.” I nod.

“Why did you harm my brother?”

“Because I knew you were going to harm my nephew.”

“Beast bring me my tool box and a duct tape.” He rushes out. “I did say answering my questions will extend your days on earth but I didn’t say you are pardoned from the torture.” Beast comes back and hands me what I asked for. I tape Bo’s mouth and then kneel before him. I take out a harmer and start hitting his toes. “This is just a warm up. Buckle up.” I turn to Beast. “Take him to the cross.” Bo tries to say something. “I can’t hear you. You will have to speak louder than that.”

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I get to Silungile’s house and find him sleeping on the couch. I cover his body with a throw and go take a shower. When I am done, I wear my nightie and then head back to the lounge. I order dinner for us and I start cleaning up. I sweep the floor and wash the dishes in the kitchen sink. I then head to the bedroom and take his laundry. I quickly do it because there isn’t many clothes. When I am done, the bell rings, I go take our order and pay. I put the food in the kitchen counter. I head back to the lounge and find him sitting up.

“Afternoon babe.” I chuckle.

“It’s already 8:30pm my love.” his eyes pop out.

“How long have I been sleeping?”

“I don’t know but I arrived here around 6pm.”

“Didn’t you get bored?”

“Nope, I cleaned, washed our clothes and cooked.” He laughs.

“What was the last part baby?” I laugh and cover my face with my hands.

“It’s the thought that counts nje babe.” He pulls me to sit on top of him.

“Did you at least order?”

“Obvious my love. What drained your energy this much?” he buries his head on my neck.

“I last slept the day before yesterday. There is some research I was doing. I guess I lost track of time.”

“It happens to the best of us. Do you wanna take a shower?” he raises his head and looks at me.

“If you’re going to join Me.” he wiggles his eyebrows and I giggle.

“But I showered when I got here.” he pouts.

“Then I am not taking a shower.”

“You are such a baby yazi.” He smiles.

“I love you too.” He stands up with me in his arms and we head to the bathroom.

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“When do you want umkhehlo to happen?” he asks me while we are eating.

“Is it necessary though? Like I don’t like it and I don’t feel like doing it babe. I just wanna get married to you.” He sighs.

“So you don’t wanna have umkhehlo?” I shake my head. He exhales out loud. “I guess I have to tell my family that we won’t be having it.”

“Instead of it, we can have an official engagement party. People can bring gifts there.”

“That actually sounds good MaChiliza.” I look at him with a bored face. “Whatever Miss Thompson.” I laugh.

We finish eating and then we cuddle on the couch while watching Lucifer on Netflix. I really wish to tell him about my other life but I am afraid of losing him. Whether he reports me or dumps me, I am afraid of the outcome. He is one of the few people in this world whom I care deeply for. He is soft, gentle, caring, kind-hearted and loving. I am sure if he were to find out that I am a cold blooded killer, he won't look at me the same way. But I deserve someone who will love me and appreciate me for who I am, the whole me and not the incomplete me. That is why I have decided that it's now or never. Fuck fear. If I die, I die. I turn to face him.

"Babe there is something I have to tell you." He turns to look at me.

"What is it my love?" I clear my throat. It's now or never.

"The thing is I love you so much and I don't wanna lose you..."

"Me too babe. I'd die if I lost you." Why did he have to interrupt me?

"That why I have to tell you this." His phone rings and I curse under my breath.

“Can we pause a little on the confession discussion?” he says teasingly and I fake a smile. He takes his phone and he answers it. “It’s work babe, can I go answer it somewhere else?” I nod and he goes to the kitchen. I sigh. Was that phone call a coincidence or a sign from the universe that I shouldn’t tell him? I guess I will tell him next time but surely not today. He comes back a few minutes later.

“Now where were we?”

“You were telling me about your crazy grandpa.” He laughs.

“Oh that guys is such a character.” He starts telling me stories about his crazy adventurous grandpa and I just laugh here and there but my mind is not here.

We get to an African boutique. I didn't come here willingly, these idiots dragged me here. I am with Sange, Seipati and Salizwa. They said I need a dress for amalobolo and umembeso. Even though my in-laws will buy a dress for me, they said I should show the in-laws what I am made of. We go inside and Sange does the talking. We are offered seats and we sit down.

"I think a flare dress will do since you chose to take all the Italian genes." Sange states and we all laugh. I know she is dissing my flat ass.

"Fusegi."

"But nawe boss did you have to take your grandpa's skin colour, shape and even look? You are just his splitting image." Seipati says.

"But in a good way though because Ty was hot and a panty dropper even in his late sixties." Sange. The store consultant comes back with 3 dresses.

"We have one beige mermaid gown with short sleeves. There is also a floral long-sleeved bodycon dress and lastly there is navy sishweshwe dress with a peplum." She explains.

“I am voting out the bodycon dress. You see miss, our boss here has a white woman’s body. In fact she is white but she speaks and understands most South African official languages.” Sange states and I just roll my eyes. I stand up.

“Please lead me to the fitting room.” the shop assistant smiles. She takes the dresses and leads me to the fitting room. I fit them all and decide that I am taking all three because I love them. I come out of the fitting room and go pay for the dresses. The big 3 comes to the till.

“Why didn’t you model for us?” Salizwa asks.

“Emabhozeni Salizwa, phuma.” She huffs.

“We came here for nothing then?” she asks again.

“No, we came here for the dresses and we got them. Thanks for dragging me here. Now help me with the bags.” they take my bags and we head out of the shop.

“Let’s go to Zapatos for the heels.” Sange says. We head there and we all buy heels. Even though we wear boots and sneakers

most of the time, we do wear heels sometimes. We pay for the heels and we head to Spur. We order and we sit while waiting for the food. “Holy shit

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look towards the entrance.” We all turn and look there. A handsome is standing there talking to a waitress.

“Now that’s a sight you don’t get to see every day.” Seipati says while licking her lips. We all laugh and turn back. “Don’t you wanna go and say hi Sange?”

“Not today babes. It’s my day off.” We all laugh at her. The handsome guy comes towards our table. Sange is sitting next to me, so I see her taking a photo of the guy. Few seconds later all his personal information appears on her tablet. She looks at it and I catch the guy’s name. He is Hlumelo Netshiozwi, he is 32 years old and is a divorcee.

“Good day ladies.” He greets with a killer smile and we all greet back except for Sange who is looking at her tablet with a frown in her face. Hlumelo looks at her and I pinch her arm.

“What?” she says turning to look at me. I point at Hlumelo with my eyes. “Ow hey there Mr. how are you? I am Sange by the way.” He smiles.

“I am Hlumelo. I don’t know but something pulled me to your table. I am here for my lunch. Mind if I join you?”

“Not at all. You’re welcome.” Salizwa says. He sits down next to Seipati. Sange closes her tablet and puts it in her bag. “I am Salizwa by the way, this is Seipati and that’s Adriane Thompson.”

“Of Thompson & Partners?” Salizwa nods. “Nice to put a name to the famous Thompson face.” He says with a smile. This guy smiles a lot.

“I wouldn’t really say famous. I am just a business woman.”

“You’re modest. Anyways what do you ladies do? Well I am a radiologist.”

“I am an IT specialist.” Sange.

“I am an accountant.” Salizwa.

“And I am a gangster.” Seipati says and Hlumelo chokes on his saliva. We all laugh. “Just joking. Most guys run to the hills when I tell them that I am a gangster.”

“So it’s a joke?” Hlumelo asks but I can see that he is spooked.

“Not really.” She takes out her gun and put in on the table.

“What exactly is it that you want Mr. Radiologist?” Hlumelo clears her throat, I can see that he is getting uncomfortable.

“I just wanted a chance to speak with Sange.”

“Ncooh shame. Relax, I have a bodyguard company so that’s why I own a gun. I am no gangster. Have you ever seen a classy gangster like me?”

“Thando from The Queen.” We all laugh. He loosens up a bit and we engage in a less serious conversation. The waiters bring our food and we dig in.

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I have been torturing Bo for the past 2 weeks and I think it’s time he meets his maker now. I go pick up gran at home and we drive to the warehouse. We get there and head to where Bo is.

We find him laying down on the matrass with his hands and legs tied. He looks like a beggar who has been beaten by the community. Isono nje. Beast helps him sit up in a chair next to the matrass. Gran looks at him intensely and takes a chair. She sits down in front of him.

“How does it feel?” Bo doesn’t even raise his head. I am pretty sure he doesn’t have the energy. “How does it feel to know that you took my husband and her grandfather away from us?” Bo mumbles a response. “You are going to have to speak louder than that.”

“Good. It feels good.” He finally speaks out. Gran chuckles. She takes out her pistol.

“This gun has 9 bullets. 2 for your eyes, 1 for your forehead, 1 for your mouth, 1 for your neck and the rest will go to your heart.”

“You can kill me but that won’t bring back Ty.” She smiles.

“You are right it won’t but it will give me closure.” Bo opens his mouth to speak but gran puts a bullet in his right eye. He groans. Gran continues shooting him and he finally takes his

last breath. "I will wait for you outside." She stands and heads out. I take my phone and take a few pictures of Bo. I send them to Sange and tell her to send an encrypted message to the underworld. I also tell her that she must let people know that Bo's territory now belongs to me.

"Beast you know what to do with the body." He nods and I head out.

Today is supposedly one of the special days for me. It's the day of ilobolo. I just pray and hope that everything goes well. Nkateko promised me that all will go well but you may never know. We are in his house by the way. I wanted the negotiations to be held at gran's house but since I am a Chiliza, they should be held at Nkateko's house. I just hope they won't jeopardize anything because I won't be held liable for what I will do to any of them. I am wearing my floral long-sleeved bodycon dress. Security is tripled because if the underground were to know that the empress is getting traditionally married today, who knows what they may do to my fiancé.

My crew is with me. I hired a catering company because I don't trust anyone from my family. Who knows what they also may do to my in-laws. Gran is monitoring almost everything. She is like a hawk. Jenna is busy drinking and blabbing about shit. She is hell bent on making this day a failure but I know she won't succeed. The in-laws have arrived but they haven't let them in. Cole is going to be part of the lobola panel.

By the way, he was genuine so we are now close but not too close because I don't trust easily. Gran sorted out his problem

with Shamma. They are now in the process of divorcing. He didn't tell the rents about his issue with Shamma because they will ask a lot of questions. He just told them that it wasn't working out and they supported him, although Thabisa didn't like the idea of Shamma leaving the family because they are like besties. Cole said he will ask in court for primary custody of their children because Shamma is not an active parent.

Nkateko invited me to lunch a week ago. Since his intentions are pure, I kept an open mind about it. He told me a lot. Like he has a mistress who has kids and he is planning on taking her as his second wife. A lot of drama is about to unfold in my family and I honestly can't wait.

He also took me to meet his second family. The mistress's name is Avuyile, she is a Xhosa woman. She is so beautiful and humble, a total opposite of my mother. But mother is a mixture of gran and Ty. It's not really surprising that she is stubborn, crazy and controlling. Her kids are Liyana (5) Likhona (3). My siblings are so cute, I can't wait for gran to meet them. I know she will laugh at her daughter once this drama unfolds. I so wanted them to come but I guess they will attend my engagement party.

“They have finally let them in.” Sange says while throwing herself next to me. “I saw Silu’s handsome big bro. damn that guy is hot with a capital H. I wouldn’t mind leaving the game for him.” we all laugh at her.

“That guy is a soldier. What makes you think he would associate himself with a gangster or a former gangster? And what makes you think you would be loyal to him? Bitch you can’t be loyal to one dick. You are an addict.” Salizwa says and Sange pouts.

“Oksalayo.” We all laugh again because she usually says that when she has no come back. “But if boss was able to get herself a man and get married to him, what makes you think that won’t happen to me?”

“BECAUSE YOU ARE A SEX ADDICT!” We all shout and she just looks at us shocked.

“Not so loud, you don’t wanna chase away my next meal.” We all laugh again. There is never a dull moment with Sange. Gran

comes in and we all keep quiet like kids who were stealing candy or sugar. She looks at us straight in our eyes one by one.

“What did Sange say?” she ask and we chuckle. She knows that most of the time, Sange always have something to say.

“I didn’t say anything gran. Seipati is the one who was talking about her crush with Silu’s brother, the one who is a soldier.” She defends her self and gran just chuckles shaking her head.

“I am pretty sure you are the one who has a crush on Adriane’s brother in law.” She places her hand on her heart dramatically.

“Unbelievable.” She says and we all laugh.

“Anyways you should prepare yourself, and you wear a doek.” Gran says pointing at me.

“Your in-laws were told that your daughter in law’s name is Oyintando Chiliza but I am pretty sure they will be shocked when a white woman comes.” Seipati says and I throw a pillow at her. I have only seen Silu’s mother and father. I haven’t met his siblings and extended family. His parents were shocked to see me but they relaxed when they learnt more about me.

“The lobola money should go to you gran because you practically raised me.”

“I know that your fathers love money so let’s just let them have it. Besides what’s R100k when you have millions in your bank account?”

“It’s change gran.” Sange says and we giggle.

“Where is your granddaughter?” I ask gran and she definitely knows who I am talking about.

“She was wasted so your brother and father locked her up in her room. I think she is just jealous because she won’t get married. Well not until she changes her stinking attitude.”

“Easier said than done.” I say and lay back on the head board.

“Help her wear the doek. They will call you guys’ soon.” She leaves.

“But I know how to tie my own doek.” I say whining and the gang laughs.

“Boss lady your hair is silky, so the doek will always be difficult to tie. Sit up straight so that I can help you.” Seipati says and I sit up. She ties the doek and when she is done I look at my

reflection in the mirror. I look like someone's wife. Well I am someone's wife.

Thabisa comes to call us and we follow her to the lounge. We sit down on the mat with our heads bowed.

"Which one of the flowers did your son see?" Nkateko asks.

"The one with silky hair." One of Silu's uncles' answer.

"How do you know that her hair is silky or have you touched it?" Cole asks with a cold tone and I just chuckle shaking my head. This isn't the time to play overprotective brother but I must say I also didn't like that he called my hair silky.

"We apologize for that in-laws. The flower is the one who is wearing the navy and yellow doek." That's me and the one talking now is Silu's soldier brother and his name is Silindile.

"You girls may leave, except for you Ntando." Nkateko says and the other ladies leave. "Ntando do you know these people?"

"I do."

"Okay

you may also leave." I stand up and head back to the room.

After an hour the negotiations come to an end. I change into the navy sishweshwe dress and Seipati helps me with the doek again. We get out of the room and go to the kitchen to take the food so that we can serve the in-laws. My aunts and neighbors ululate when they see me, I guess it's the dress.

"Ntando start by serving your husband and his brothers."
Thabisa says.

"Here is his food," Gran says while handing me a tray with a covered plate, spoon and a hand sanitizer. I take it. "When you get there, kneel and serve him his food. Don't look at his eyes, that will show disrespect." I nod and head to where Silu is at.

I get there and do a quick search with my eyes. I finally locate him and head to where he is seated. He is chatting to his big brother and a young man whom I assume is his younger brother. I kneel down in front of him and hand him the tray.

"Here is your food Mwelase." I take a quick look at him and I don't miss his blushing face. He takes the sanitizer first, sanitizes his hands and then takes the food.

"You look beautiful my love."

“Thank you.” I stand up and he quickly grabs my hand. He plants a soft kiss in it and most ladies ululate. Drama guys. Anyways I head back to the kitchen blushing like hell. I take both his brother’s plates and head back to where they are seated. I also kneel and hand them their food with a smile.

“Aren’t you going to also say my clan name while handing me my food?” asks the younger brother.

“Simlethelwe this is my wife. Uzothopha mina kuphela not you.” Silu comes to my rescue.

“We are brothers. I thought we shared everything.” The big brother laughs.

“Not when it comes to her.”

“Thank you MaMdunge and you do look beautiful.” Silindile says, before my cheeks embarrass me I just stand up and head back to the kitchen.

I place the tray on the counter and head to the TV room. I find my brothers eating while watching TV. These guys are very weird. Other males in the family are blending with the in-laws and these two are just watching Prison Break. I sit down next to

Anathi. By the way he has recovered and he is back to his bubbly self.

“Why aren’t you eating?” Cole asks.

“I am not hungry,”

“Let me go grab your fruit salad in the fridge.” Anathi says and springs off before I can even object.

“Don’t you wanna know how much they paid for you?” Cole asks.

“I am not interested brother. Besides I don’t care about the money.” He chuckles.

“When I grow up I wish to be rich like you and don’t care about a six figure check.”

“You will get there brother, you will get there.” I say with a voice full of sarcasm and he laughs. Jenna comes to the TV room and sits next to Cole. She doesn’t say anything but she starts eating from his plate. “Where is your bae?”

“She didn’t wanna come because people were going to throw insults at her, calling her a home wrecker. Plus your other sister

in law is here, she would've caused drama." I laugh. Anathi comes back with my fruit salad. He hands it to me.

"Thanks monkey."

"When will you stop calling me that?" he whines. I laugh at him and start eating.

"Until you get married."

"Not everyone is lucky like you." Jenna says and we all ignore her comment.

When we are done eating Anathi takes the containers to the kitchen. I head to my room to check on notifications on my phone. After an hour or so, Silu's sisters and female cousins come and dress me up in a mustard mermaid dress with black designs in the end with a matching scarf on my shoulders. The doek is also mustard and black. The heels are black. I guess the izibizo ceremony have started. We head outside and they are busy singing. They give me my gifts and when I look at bae, I see him wearing a shirt which is similar to my dress and black chinos.

Anathi takes my gifts to my room and I head to where my parent in-laws are. Of course Silu is with me, or else I wouldn't have got the courage to head there by myself. Well I would've

went there with guards. We get to them and his mother hugs me. I am not a fan of hugs but I am not going to tell her that.

“You look beautiful my daughter.” She says after breaking the hug. “Ngiyabonga ma (thank you mom).”

“You look lovely my daughter. Son you chose well.” His father says.

“Come on dad. This is me, Silungile, I have taste.” He boasts and his parents just laugh.

“Truth be told, MaChiliza is the first beautiful woman you have ever dated.” Simlethelwe says. Silu opens his mouth to say something but Silindile beats him to it.

“You are not about to mention your not so beautiful exes in front of MaMdunge.” Silu looks at me.

“I am sorry love.” he kisses my cheek.

We chat with his parents a little more and time comes for them to leave. I promise that I will visit them the following week and his mother is very happy about that. I am pretty sure she will be disappointed to learn that I can't cook. That will definitely make me loose points.

I pack my bags. I have packed mostly skirts, dresses and sandals, which are things I don't usually wear. Gran has taught me a few quick dishes which I can whip up. She also said I should treat my in-laws to dinner so that they won't expect me to cook on most days. I don't know how Silu will feel about that because he doesn't like it when I spend my money. I think I will just order some food while they are at work and they will find food ready.

I take my luggage and head downstairs. Gran hugs me and then I head outside. I give the bags to one of my guards. He loads it in the car and we drive out. By the way I am wearing a black long sleeved turtleneck with black knee length pleated leather skirt and black ankle boots. Well also a doek. We get to the Ndaba household. My driver, who is Cane, offloads my bags. We head inside and we are welcomed by Mrs. Ndaba. She hugs me and leads me to the lounge.

"Don't worry darling, Simlethelwe will take her bags upstairs." She says to Cane. He nods and places my bags down. He then looks at me and I stand up.

“Ma let me quickly talk to my guards, I will be back just now.”

“Take your time, but not too long.” I chuckle and she laughs.
Cane and I head outside.

“Boss lady how sure are we that you are secured in this house?
We can’t just leave you here defenseless and more like
stranded.” I breathe out loud.

“Cane contact Salizwa, she will tell you everything you need to
know about my stay here.” he exhales and nods.

“Make sure you don’t burn your mother in-law’s kitchen.” He
says with a smirk and I punch him on his shoulder playfully.
They all know that I don’t know how to cook.

“Fuck off.”

“With pleasure.” He climbs into the car and drives off. I sigh and
head back inside. I find Simlethelwe coming downstairs and my
bags are no longer in the bottom of the stairs. I guess he has
taken them to Silu’s room.

“Hey sister-in-law.” He says with a huge smile and comes to hug me. This family is full of huggers. I guess I will adapt as time goes by.

“Hi Simlethelwe.”

“I was actually expecting you to pronounce my name with a white or Italian accent.” I chuckle.

“I was born and bred in South Africa. I only went to Italy to visit where my grandpa used to live. I don’t know how I inherited his genes because even his daughter took after my gran.”

“It is really a mystery. Soon you will find scientists wanting to experiment about your grandpa’s strong genes.” I actually laugh this time around.

“Where is your mother?”

“She is in the kitchen.” I nod and head to the kitchen. I find her defrosting meat.

“Don’t mind me my daughter. I love cooking for my husband but you can actually help me by doing the salads.” I am one lucky daughter of gun.

I prepare the salads while getting to know my mother in law better. She is a very kind-hearted and welcoming woman. She and gran would hit it off from the start. She tells me about how his sons were growing up and I also tell her about my family. I mention how my inheritance caused a rift in my family and she advises me to be vigilant around them. She says and I quote 'Never trust anyone, especially someone who have betrayed you before'.

Later in the evening we are joined by her older sons

her husband and their youngest daughter, Siyamthanda. She is a gadget freak so it's like she lives in the digital world. She doesn't even acknowledges my presence. I take my phone and hack into her gadgets. I shut them down and place my phone in my pocket as if nothing happened. I watch her shake them furiously and when nothing happens she gives up and actually pays attention to the people in the room.

She notices me and greets me. She speaks English with me and when Silu tells her that I can understand Zulu, her eyes pop out. We eat dinner and when we are done, Simlethelwe serves us cake which was baked by him. Turns out he is a pastry chef. I

didn't do my research on Silu's family because I wanted to know them the natural way.

"So how long are you staying with us makoti?" Silu's father asks.

"I am leaving on Friday. I have a very busy life but I wanted to just spend a week with my in-laws."

"You can't work from here?" Silindile asks. I look at him and smile.

"I have clubs and companies. I sometimes arrive home after midnight or don't sleep at home at all. I don't think you guys can appreciate that very much."

"What will you do once you guys get married?"

"I will set my priorities straight. For now I am hands on with my businesses."

"Okay that's enough grilling Silindile. And my daughter, I wouldn't mind you working late." Silu's father says. "As long as you don't come home drunk." We all laugh.

“When my grandpa died I went very hard on the bottle, I was once hospitalized for alcohol poisoning. So I stopped drinking. I only drink water most of the time and sometimes juice.”

“You loved him that much?” Siya asks.

“Yes. He was like a father to me. We spent a lot of time together and we bonded so much. I couldn’t accept his death even though he was killed in my presence.” They all gasp. I have never told Silu that I was there when pa was killed.

“How did you survive?” Siya asks again.

“I was coming from the bathroom of his study and he was sitting in his chair. The killer thought he was alone, so he killed him and fled.”

“That must’ve been hard for you. To witness a man you love being killed.” Silu’s mom says. I chuckle.

“I have accepted it and I am learning to move on.”

We move on to the next topic and I am glad because as much as I am slowly but surely moving on, I miss pa so much. I hope that wherever he is, he is happy and proud of me. We finish eating dessert and I wash the dishes with the help of Siyamthanda. She is busy grilling me about my businesses and

my wealth. I am happy to answer some of her questions but not all of them. When we are done we head to the lounge and find only the brothers there. I unlock Siyamthanda's gadgets and then say goodnight to them.

I head to Silu's room and just as I am about to take off my clothes, he comes in and holds my waist from behind. I chuckle and turn around to face him. We haven't kissed ever since I arrived here because I have been with his mom most of the time. We kiss and he starts to unzip my skirt. I giggle and unbutton his shirt. We undress each other and when we are both naked I pull him to the bathroom.

"But babe I thought you were going to give me at least one round." He whines and I laugh at him.

"I am tired Mwelase. Can we just shower and sleep. I promise you, I will give you the most mind blowing sex at the morning." He pouts and finally gives in.

We head to the bathroom and get inside the shower. I take his shower gel and apply it slowly in his body. He is already breathing heavily and groaning. His dick is already up and hard as ever. I finish bathing him and go down to suck his dick. He

groans and cries out like a little girl. He calls out my name and finally shoots all his cum in my mouth. I swallow and then shower while he is still breathing heavily.

He holds me from behind and just shoves his dick in my pussy without warning. I gasp and just allow him to do what he wants. When we are done we finish showering and head to the bedroom. He gets dressed in his boxers while I wear my panties only. We get under covers and chat for a while. We later drift to sleep in each other's arms. I love him and I don't see myself being with another man.

I am woken up by a bacon aroma. Ncooh bae has made me breakfast in bed. But I quickly jump up when I remember I am at my in-laws house. Gran said I should wake up early so that I can cook breakfast for my in-laws. She did teach me how to make bacon, eggs, baked beans and fried sliced tomatoes and toasted bread. Yoh I am toast shame. I look at Silu who is looking at me with an amused expression.

“What time is it? I am supposed to be making breakfast for your family. What will they say when your mother has to make it even when I am here?” he laughs.

“Baby breathe. Calm down. Everyone is gone. Breakfast is not the most important meal here at home. Mom has gone to the farm. Siya has gone to school. Silindile has gone to the gym and Simlethelwe has gone to his restaurant. As you know dad always goes out early and comes back late. He only came home earlier yesterday to welcome you.” I breathe out loud.

“So I only have to make breakfast for your brother?”

“Hell no, he has his own hands. If he wants someone to make him breakfast he should get married.” I laugh.

“Are you jealous that I wanna cook for your brother?”

“You have never even cooked for me yet you wanna cook for him? Never baby.”

“Relax. If he is single, tell him Sange is available.” He laughs out loud shaking his head.

“I think I might just tell him that. Anyways eat your breakfast my queen. You still owe me a mind blowing sex. So get some energy.” I just laugh and start eating my food. When I am done he doesn't even take the dishes to the kitchen. He just attacks me with a kiss.

When we are done with our morning glory, we both shower. He makes the bed and take the dishes to the kitchen. He is such a gentleman. I get dressed in a black medusa accent knit dress and black sneakers. I am used to sneakers and boots, so they are my life. I also wear a black doek. I take my phone and send a text to Cane. I am pretty sure he is around somewhere and just waiting for my instructions. I head downstairs. I didn't bring my tablet and laptop so I have to go check out my companies.

I get downstairs and find the brothers sitting and watching TV. I greet Silindile and then ask to speak with Silu. We head to the kitchen and he attacks me with a kiss. I think being at his home makes him hornier. I just laugh and kiss him back

wrapping my arms around his neck. We finally break the kiss and we just giggle.

“Why are you so horny?”

“You gave it to me good this morning my love. I wish we can just stay in bed and fuck all day.” I laugh.

“I have to check out some of my companies. Your mom isn’t here so I can’t stay with just you and your brother.”

“Are we boring you? You haven’t even given us a chance.” I just chuckle.

“I have to go. I will come back before noon.”

“Can I take you to where you are headed?”

“Don’t worry about me.” I head to the front door with him on my heels. We get outside and find Cane already in the driveway.

“When did he get here?” I just laugh and perk his lips. I climb into the car and Cane drives out.

“Where to boss.”

“Heavenly Hotel.” He just nods drives to the hotel.

I get there and find Jenna chatting with her boyfriend in one of the tables. I just pass without saying anything because I know she will give me a mean attitude. I get to the kitchen and the staff welcomes me with warm hands. It has been a while since I have come to this hotel. I then head to my office after asking them to bring me some brunch and the hotel books. I look through them and I am happy that everything is going well. Even Jenna is doing her job well which is unlike her.

I call Sange and tell her to go cook lunch for the Ndaba brothers and that she must pour love potion for Silindile. She laughs and tells me that she is headed there right now. She says she is wearing lingerie and a long coat with heels. I remind her that my fiancé is there and she just laughs again. I get back to the books and when I am done, I head to Madam Ty restaurant. I named it that when I rebranded it. Madam Ty is gran.

We get to the restaurant and I find Seipati with some of the Cobras at the door. They seem armed and ready for war. I ask Cane what is going on and he just shrugs. I climb out of the car and head to where Seipati is at.

“What’s up?”

“The Germans are inside.” I look at her frowning.

“What the fuck do they want?” she shrugs.

“Let’s go find out.” we head inside and I find Perrette and Murray eating, they are with two South African ladies. It looks like a double date of some sort. We get to their table.

“Herren (gentlemen).” I greet with a little smile.

“Die Frau der Stunde. (The woman of the hour.)” Murray says with his annoying smile. I sit down on the vacant seat and Seipati sits next to me. When I look behind me I see Beast and smirk.

“Was bringt Sie in mein Territorium? (What brings you to my territory?)”

“Geschäft, aber wir werden zu einem sichereren Ort gehen als dies. (Business but we are going to go to a more secure place than this.)” Perrette says.

“Lassen Sie uns jetzt mit Ihrem Koch zubereitet werden. Speisen Sie mit uns. (For now let’s just enjoy food prepared by your chef. Dine with us.)” Murray says with his annoying smile again.

Seipati and I order just salad and I ask for water while she asks for a glass of wine. When I am done eating, I leave them in the table and head to my office. I check the books for a while and then head back to the table. I tell them that we are going to Club Classic to discuss whatever business they wanna discuss with me. We get to Club Classic and head to the basement. We sit down and the waitress serves them whiskey while I ask for bottled water.

“You are not drinking?” Perrette asks looking at me suspiciously.

“Not today.” He nods. “So what may I help you with gentlemen?”

“We want the Mozambican territory. Just name your price.”

“It’s not for sale. I can give you 10% of it but not the whole of it.” Murray just chuckles.

“What are we going to do with 10%? Really Thompson? Don’t play with us.”

“I am the one who defeated Bo. I earned that territory. It is mine. Don’t come here demanding that territory.”

“We are not fighting you Empress. We just want a share of that territory.” Perrette raises his hands as a sign of surrendering.

“I won’t have an answer for you, at least not now. But soon. It was a surprise seeing you here gentlemen.” I stand up and head out.

“You are not afraid of what they may do to you or your family?” Seipati asks as we climb inside the car.

“I am under the Italians. They now own Bo’s territory. The decision is up to them to do what they want. I can’t just take decision just because I am afraid of what the Germans may do should I not agree with them.”

“I hear you, boss.” They drop me off at the Ndaba mansion and they leave.

13

I find the brothers playing PS5 at the TV room. Simlethelwe is there with them. I greet them and chill with them for a while.

“Did Sange come?” I ask looking at Silu. He and his brothers share eye contact and he just chuckles looking at me.

“I ended up being the third wheel my love. She came here and cooked breakfast and then went with Silindile to his room. I don’t know what occurred there but what I know is that she is still in there sleeping.” Simlethelwe laughs.

“Well that’s Sange for you.” I stand up. “Which room is she in?”

“First door on the second floor.”

“Okay.” I head there and find her under the covers. I just chuckle and kick her out of the bed. She jumps up and gives me a nervous smile. “Do you wish to die Sange? Do you have a death wish?” she looks at me confused.

“But boss you told me to come here.”

“In che modo i tedeschi entrano nel mio territorio e persino chiedono un incontro senza che io sappia? (How do the Germans enter my territory and even demand a meeting without me knowing?)” Her eyes pop out.

“Cosa stai parlando del capo? (What are you talking about boss?)”

“Perrette and Murray were at Madam Ty and they fuckin demanded I give them a portion of the Mozambican territory. Now my question is, what is your job if you fail to inform me about such? You all know how I hate surprises.”

“I am sorry boss. I was busy with auctions these past few days. I totally didn't pay attention to other things.”

“Devo mettere un proiettile sulla tua figa per ricordarti i tuoi doveri? (Must I put a bullet on your pussy to remind you of your duties?)”

“No I am sorry. It won't happen again. What do you need from me?” she asks while getting dressed quickly.

“Inform the pilot that I am leaving for Italy on Sunday. I have to talk to the capo before I can do anything about the

Mozambican territory and also find out if he has some opportunities for me.” I turn and head out.

I get to Silu’s room and change my shoes. I wear slippers and then take a burner phone. I head to the bathroom and make a call to the Consigliere. We chat for a few minutes and I also inform him about my visit. When I am done, I disconnect the burner phone and destroy it. I then head downstairs and find the brothers cooking. Well Simlethelwe and Silu are cooking. Silindile is sitting on the barstool.

“Aren’t I the one who is supposed to cook?” they all turn and look at me.

“Not today koti. You also deserve to rest sometimes.”
Simlethelwe replies with a smile.

“You’re too kind.” I sit on the barstool next to Silindile. “So what did you and Sange get up to?” He laughs.

“All I can say is that I think I have found my equal and my soul mate.” Silu laughs. He knows how Sange is like.

“Are you sure you can keep her brother and keep up with her sex drive?” I burst out laughing and Silu also laughs.

“If she wants to be kept, then I will.”

“Do you even have her number?” I ask still laughing.

“You, my favorite sister-in-law, are going to give it to me.” I continue laughing.

“I wish to know the kind of a woman this Sange is.” Simlethelwe says.

“Since your brother seems interested in her, you will maybe know her more. Anyways I wanna take the family out for dinner at Madam Ty. My chef has this new dish and I want you guys to try it out.”

“You own Madam Ty?” Simlethelwe asks and I nod. “That’s awesome and relax we are coming. I have heard so much about that restaurant and its’ class. I actually wanted to take my girlfriend there for our second anniversary.”

“That’s so cool. Do you think your parents will agree?”

“I will persuade them MaChiliza.” Simlethelwe says and I just chuckle.

We just chat about anything and everything. I find out that Simlethelwe is 24 years old and Silindile is 32. Silu is 29 years by the way. We are later joined by Siyamthanda and by then, we are sitting at the TV room watching Prison Break. This time she is not that attached in her gadgets. In fact she is engaging in conversations.

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Silu's parents agreed to dine at Madam Ty so now we are headed there. I am riding with Silu and he is driving. My phone beeps and I open it. It's a text message from Sange saying I am being tailored. I know it's the Germans, they are fucking predictable. I take my business phone and call Muriel. Please don't be confused because I am multilingual. I am fluent in German, Italian

French, Spanish, Portuguese and other languages. Muriel answers her phone.

"Boss lady."

"Perrette and Murray. Dícales que dejen mi territorio antes de hacerle algo malo y deben dejar de adaptarme. (Tell them to leave my territory before I do something bad to them and they must stop tailoring me.)"

“En eso. Por cierto, ¿qué están haciendo aquí? (On it. By the way what are they doing here?)”

“Mozambique.”

“Wow okay. I won't disappoint.”

“Sure.” I hang up.

“Is everything okay?” Silu asks and I turn to face him with a smile on my face.

“Just a hiccup and work. Nothing to worry about. My CEO is already on top of it.”

“Don't you ever think of working in one of your companies? Like being a CEO in any of them?” I chuckle.

“I have no experience. I am only a qualified hacker and I have so many responsibilities. Sitting in an office from 8 to 4 will make me neglect some of my companies and I don't want that. I once neglected them and when I came back, I found new employees who were rude and I found that some people were stealing from me. From there on, I promised myself that I will visit the companies maybe twice a week.”

“What did you do to the people who stole from you?”

“I got them arrested. Wherever they are, I am pretty sure they will think twice in their next life, before stealing from their boss.”

“Did you get back your money though?”

“Yes, 80% of the money.”

“That’s great babe.”

We get to the restaurant and the hostess leads us to our table. We sit down and start by ordering starters. The rents can’t stop complementing the beauty of this place. I am not surprised that they have never been here before because this is one of the most expensive restaurant in Mzansi. Also the brothers have never been here. Only Silu has because I brought him here. The starters come and we start digging.

The new dish comes and they can’t stop complementing it. They even call out the chef to pass the complements and she is pleased by this. She keeps smiling from ear to ear. When we are done eating, we have a few drinks at the lounge listening to soothing jazz. The rents even start dancing slowly and we laugh at them. Silu forces me to also dance. He knows very well

that I have two left feet. Either way I stand up and we also move to the rhythm, not dance but move.

The night comes to an end and we all head back to the mansion. I inform them that I am leaving the following day. Silu's mom is sad that we didn't spend much time bonding but I promise her that I will spend more time with her from now on. Silu fucks me good and I thank God that he soundproofed his room because surely his parents and siblings would've thought that he was killing me because of my high pitched screams.

14

“Gran I am going to Italy on Sunday. There is some business I need to take care of. Maybe I will be back in 2 weeks’ time.” I say to gran. We are seated at the porch drinking juice. I don’t know when I am going to go back to drinking whiskey but I know when I am dining with the Italian drug lords, I will be drinking.

“I am coming with you.” I turn and look at her frowning.

“Why?” she chuckles.

“I also have some business to take care of. I wanted to talk to you so that you can borrow me the jet but I am glad that you are also going.”

“What business are you going to take care of gran?”

“That’s none of your concern Adriane. I should tell one of the helpers to pack our bags.” I just chuckle and shake my head.

“You have a man in Italy? I know you like them dark and full of Italian accent?”

“You are not that old for me to knock some sense in that big head of yours.” I laugh out loud. “Anyways your family is coming over for dinner.”

“I will cook.” She laughs.

“Did you cook at your in-laws?”

“I was so lucky gran. Silu’s mother loves cooking for her husband so she cooked most of the time. Silu’s brother also cooked, he is a chef. I only took them to Madam Ty restaurant once, and I guess that counts as cooking.” she laughs again.

“You sly fox. You are so lucky. You are definitely Ty’s granddaughter.” She continues laughing.

“But when I come back from Italy, I promise I will ask Chef Gozo to give me some cooking classes.” Chef Gozo is the chef in one of my restaurants. She is very friendly, so I know for sure she will be very delighted to spend those few hours with me. She really admires me. She usually post me on Wednesdays as her Woman Crush Wednesday. If I didn’t know her husband, I would say she is a lesbian and has some hots for me.

“That’s good to know, but for tonight I will do the cooking.” I chuckle.

“I guess I will help with the chopping then.”

“As long as you won’t cut yourself.” She says and laughs again. She is loving this.

“Come on gran. You know very well that I can handle knives. I have handled bigger knives than the ones you have in your kitchen.”

“If you say so.” She sips her tea with a smug on her face. This gogo though.

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“When you come back from Italy I want you to officially meet Eve. Not as your employee but as your future sister-in-law.” My brother says. We are sitting at the patio. He arrived first, followed by Anathi who is at the kitchen bonding with gran.

“Rather I meet her as just your girlfriend. You just got out from a toxic marriage, you don’t have to rush marriage.” He sighs.

“But we have been dating for so long. I think it’s only fair that I mark my territory.”

“Don’t feel compelled to marry her or think that it’s a good thing because of the years you have been together. Give each other time. You have never explored your relationship publicly. Now is your time. Take her out on dates anywhere in Mzansi without fear of your ex-wife or her friends spotting you. It’s like you are out of the closet now. Embrace your relationship and just have fun. Forget about marriage for now.” He smiles and side hugs me.

“I never thought I would get relationship advice from you.” I laugh.

“You are making fun of my therapy skills?” he also laughs.

“Anyways I can’t wait to meet her officially. She seems like a good woman.”

“She is.” he smiles like a kid seeing candy.

--

The situation around the table is intense. Which can only mean one thing. Nkateko told mother about Avuyile. She looks emotional and vulnerable. I have never seen her like this. Even though she is an emotional bully, I don’t think any child wants to see their mother breaking in front of them. She just stands up and head upstairs. I am guessing she is going to her old

room. Gran attempts to stand up but I tell her that I am going to check on Thabisa.

I go upstairs and like I said, she is in her old room. She is cuddling her old teddy and she is weeping silently. I get inside the room and go to sit next to her. I hug her and she just sobs painfully. Luckily I closed the door and the all the rooms in this house are soundproofed

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so no one will hear.

“I know I may be crazy and irrational but I love your father Ntando. I love him with my all. What he has done is unforgivable. I didn’t think he would do me like this. Worst part is that the other woman has two kids and a third one on the way. You know if I didn’t love your father this much I would’ve put a bullet through his skull the minute he told me about this other family.” She sniffs.

“Is he divorcing you?”

“That would’ve been better. He told me that he loves me too much to let me go. Instead he is taking her as his second wife. What must I do?”

“I think you need some time apart from each other. You can move back here with me and gran or you can go to Italy with us on Sunday.” she raises her head and looks me.

“You guys are relocating to Italy?” I chuckle.

“No our lives are here. We are just going there to unwind for two weeks and after that we come back.”

“I will come with you guys. I need some fresh air and to think about this. I know I have no choice but to accept this woman but that doesn’t make it hurt any less.” I hug her again.

“You are going to be okay mother.” She sniffs and wraps her arms around me.

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“I am going to Italy on Sunday for a business matter.” I say talking to Silu. We are laying in my bed. He has come to visit me at home. He immediately sits up straight. He looks at me in disbelief.

“Repeat what you just said.” He says in a firm tone. I know that I am in deep shit. Silu and I hardly argue but when we do, anything is possible.

“I have a business related matter that I need to attend to in Italy. It’s very urgent and it needs my attention. I know I didn’t tell you in time and I am very sorry for that. If it wasn’t important, you know I would’ve deployed someone to do it for me.” I say talking very quick. I don’t know why I am nervous all of the sudden.

“How long will you be gone?” I can’t tell his mood by looking at his facial expression because it isn’t giving nothing away.

“Maybe a week or two. I really need to do this. I am sorry again babe.” I say touching and massaging his shoulders. He breathes out loud.

“I am not mad. I just don’t like the fact that you waited till today to tell Me.” it’s already Friday.

“Don’t worry I am coming back and as soon as I am back we will host our engagement party. You can set it to the second Saturday of next month. I will tell Sange to handle everything that needs planning. You will just have to send her the guest list.” He frowns.

“You are going away without Sange? That’s a first.” He knows that wherever I go, I am always with Sange, Salizwa and Seipati. I never leave them behind.

“They have obligations babe.” He nods.

“I can’t wait to brag about my mixed race fiancé to my extended family when they finally see you.” He says going back to his jolly self. I laugh.

“Ngizokulaya because I won’t even talk English. I will just stick to Zulu the whole night.”

“Mara why?” I continue laughing. He is one of the few people on this earth who manages to make me laugh or smile effortlessly. That’s one of the reasons why I love him and why I am marrying him.

I love him with my all and I made a promise to myself that I will protect and put his life first for as long as I live. If someone were to kidnap him and ask me to give up my wealth, I would do that without even thinking twice. That’s how much I love him. I don’t know how he will react when he finally finds out who I really am but that is not really important. We have dating

for like 3 years and my other life hasn't affected him, why would it start now?

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We drive to Ty's mansion which is located in Florence. We landed a few minutes ago. I am with gran, mother, Beast and Salizwa. I have no worries because I left Seipati and Sange to hold down the fort. We get to the mansion and the guards guarding the place opens the gate for us without any hassles. We drive the long driveway and we finally get to the house. We climb off the cars and the guards quickly rush to get our bags when they see that it's us.

"Regina, vecchia principessa e Giovane principessa. È bello rivederti. (Queen, old princess and young princess. It's good to see you again.)" Leon, a loyal guard. He has been our employee ever since Ty was still alive. He has a very strong Italian accent but again everyone here is like this.

"Good to see you too Leon. Long time no see." Gran says and doesn't even wait for him to respond. She heads towards the door and the guards quickly open for her. I smile at Leon and follow gran. We both frown when hear voices coming from the

lounge. We head there and we are shocked to find a family relaxed chatting like they own the place. An old man comes from the in-house bar typing something from his phone. The minute he raises his head I withdraw my gun from my waist and point straight at him.

“Papa.” Thabisa says and gran just collapses.

15

“Hai cinque secondi per dirmi chi cazzo sei prima di soffiare il tuo cervello. (You have 5 seconds to tell me who the fuck you are before I blow your brains.)”

The man who looks exactly like pa smiles. Beast picks up gran from the floor and go place her on the vacant couch in the lounge. Thabisa is still shocked beside me. This man looks unshaken by the fact that I have a gun pointed directly at him.

“Nonno che sono queste persone e cosa sta succedendo? (Grandfather who are these people and what is going on?)” Says a young girl who looks like she is about 7 years old. I quickly put my gun on my waist but my eyes doesn't leave the eyes of the imposter in front of me.

“SPIEGARE! (EXPLAIN!)” I shout and he flinches.

“How about we all go sit down then I explain myself?” I huff and go sit at a vacant couch. Thabisa sits next to me. Her whole body is shaking.

“LEON!” He comes quickly to the lounge.

“PRINCIPESSA!”

“Prendi la mia madre acqua con zucchero. (Get my mother water with sugar.)” He rushes to the kitchen and comes back with the sugared water. He hands it to me and I help mother drink because I am sure she won’t be able to hold the glass.

“Parla vecchia. (Talk old man.)”

“You are exactly as he said you will be like.”

“Who?”

“Tyler. I am Tyrene by the way. His twin brother.”

“He said he doesn’t have a relationship with his twin. They parted ways long ago. Why would you live in your twin’s house whereas you guys didn’t see eye to eye?” mother says. She seems to have calmed down. Ty did tell us about his twin but he said exactly what mother is saying.

“We did have our disagreements but we reconciled a few years back. He knew that you would get like this when you finally see me. I have been wanting to come to South Africa but I know he

created a name for himself there. If I were to go there, people will mistake me for him and they would say I faked my own death.”

“Why are you living in his house though?” I ask. I still don’t trust him.

“I have had financial problems so I moved here but everything is back to normal now. I know you don’t trust me. I have a video though. I think it might shed some light.”

“Beast get me a glass of water.” He rushes to the kitchen and comes back with a glass of water. I pour a small part of it on her face. She gasps and wakes up. She sits up straight.

“I just have the weirdest dream ever.” She looks around the room. “Oww shit it wasn’t a dream.” She huffs. “I guess you are Ty’s ugly twin brother Neh.” She smirks.

“If I am ugly that means your husband was also ugly.” He says with a smug on his face.

“Can someone just explain what’s going on here?” says a woman who looks like she is in her late forties.

By the way, we found 5 people in the lounge. One older woman, a lady in her twenties, a guy in his early thirties and two kids. They all look like Tyrene's descendants. Even the older woman looks like his daughter. I wonder where his wife is.

"Darling this is Thabile, Ty's wife; Thabisa, Ty's daughter and Adriane, Ty's granddaughter. The others are Adriane's employees. And ladies this is Anastasia and Liam, my kids and this is Clara, Ryan and Lalia, my grandkids." Tyrone does the introductions.

"You are too old that other ladies don't look your way? Where is the wife?" I have a feeling gran and Tyrone has some beef and I wish to know what the reason is for it.

"I am a divorcee and my kids stay with me. My ex-wife is staying with her other two grandchildren. My daughter in law also lives here. Anastasia is going through a separation with her husband and Clara is in between relationships."

“Like a true Thompson.” Mother says and we all laugh. At least the ice has been broken.

“I will go freshen up and maybe you can show me the video afterwards.” I stand up and head to my room.

--

I showered and took a nap when I got to my room. I wake up after two hours and go wash my face after washing my mouth with a mouth wash. I moisturize my face and head back to my room. I find Salizwa sitting in my bed typing something in her laptop. She is wearing all black which can only mean one thing, we are headed to the meeting with the familia. I go to my closet and get dressed in black leather pants

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turtleneck, boots and trench coat. I return to my room and she looks at me smiling.

“We are supposed to meet the familia in two hours, so we will go eat dinner and then head to the Capo’s house.” I nod and we head out. Leon tells us that mother and gran are at the study and they have asked for my presence. I head there while

Salizwa heads to the lounge. I find them sitting and drinking wine while Tyrone is drinking whiskey.

“You look like you are headed somewhere.” Tyrone says when he sees me entering the study. I just roll my eyes and go sit at a vacant chair. He stands up and opens the TV on his study. The twins appear and Ty automatically smiles. I know it’s him because of the scar in his neck.

“I know you are angry at me baby and I am pretty sure you pulled a gun on this idiot.” He chuckles and I just giggle. “I am sorry for not introducing you to Tyrone when I was still alive. It’s just that he was a non-factor.” He face becomes serious. “MaMhlanga,” he says in a funny accent. Gran’s maiden surname is Mhlanga. “I know you two don’t see eye to eye and I am pretty sure you have been at each other’s throat ever since you have reconciled. I love you.” Tyrone rolls his eyes. “Stop with the jealousy, it doesn’t suit you.”

“Whatever.” Tyrone replies.

“Thabisa if you are watching this video, just know that I love you so much and don’t settle for less. If that Zulu man isn’t treating you well, leave him. You are my princess and you deserve so much better.” Mother sobs and gran comforts her. “Adriane, Q has something that he needs to give you. Don’t rush hi and don’t go confronting him. He will give you when the time is right. I love you all so much and pass my regards to my other grandchildren.” The video ends and I quickly wipe a tear that has fallen down my cheeks.

--

We are sitting around the table in the dining room. The daughter in law has come back from work. She is a pediatrician and she has her own practice. She is married to Liam and their daughter is Lalia. Liam is also a mechanic like Nkateko, he also owns a car dealership. Anastasia is a retired midwife while Clara is a model. I am not surprised though because most Thompson women have those petite bodies and they are fit for being models. Even mother has that body. I also inherited it.

“Since you guys are family, it’s only fair that we invite you to Adriane’s engagement party which is in two weeks.” Gran says.

“We are going to South Africa grandpa?” Lalia asks with a beautiful smile plastered on her face. Tyrone looks at gran first and then he answers.

“Yes darling, we are going to South Africa.”

“I can’t wait.” She stands up and runs up and down the dining hall. Ryan also joins her and they make so much noise. Mother just laughs and looks at gran.

“They remind me of Adriane and Anathi when they were young.” I chuckle.

“I was never as active as they are when I was young.” I defend myself.

“Clara has always been close with her grandfather, she spent most of her time cooped up in the study with father.” Anastasia says and Clara blushes.

“That’s not true mother.”

“She sounds exactly like Adriane. She spent so much time with Ty that I was jealous.” Gran says and we all laugh.

16

“You are still beautiful as ever Thompson.” Nowalk says. He is also part of the familia. He runs the gun smuggling part of the mafia.

“And you are still as crunchy as ever Nowalk.” I say and they all laugh. The Capo just chuckles because he hardly laughs. He is Dilara Lanclos. He is 50 years old. He is married and has 3 kids. The way he is so tough, I sometimes wish to see how he is with his family because the man hardly laughs.

“Now what’s up?” the Consigliere says and Salizwa chuckles.

“Since we are under this familia, we opted to hand out the Mozambican territory to you, the one that Bo owned. We have no intentions of benefiting from it unless you think we should.” Salizwa says and she is not wrong. I really have no interest in benefitting from a territory of a man who was responsible for the death of my pa.

“Is that true Thompson? You really don’t want anything to do with it?” Dunnam asks looking at me.

“Yes you can do whatever you want with it. Just so you know, the Germans want this territory. Murray and Perrette even paid me a visit few days ago.” The Capo chuckles.

“I will make it known to the whole underworld that I now control this territory so that they can back off from you.” Dilara says. I nod.

“We have a heist on Friday. You can come if you want.” Kendal says with a smug on her face while looking at me. She is a psychopath and a womanizer, yeah she is a lesbian and has a thing for me.

“I am not here for work but you can take Salizwa with you. It’s been a long time since she has had some action.” I reply.

“South Africa that boring?” Kendal asks and I just shrug.

“Not really boring but when you are the queen and ruler, very few people dare you and even attempt to cross you.” Salizwa says.

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Tyrone really looks like pa, I know for sure if he were to go to South Africa, many people will mistake him for Ty. He even looks after his body. The slight difference is the scar that he has on his cheek. Pa didn't have it. I am sitting at the patio after having breakfast. It's my third day here in Italy. I am just thinking about a lot of things that have been happening in my life.

I am secretly analyzing my new family members. Anastasia is an Italian version of mother. They have so much in common. They are even bonding. Today they are planning on going shopping together. I can tell you that mother is going to ask Ana to move to South Africa so that their bond doesn't break. Liam is more like Cole. I am suspecting that he is cheating on his wife. It doesn't take a year to spot a man with a wondering eye.

Clara is a legal version of me. She is 22 years old. She hardly talks but we have a bond. She even said we are going shopping

today for a dress that I am going to wear at my engagement party. She is also buying her outfit today. She said tonight we are going clubbing. We have a very unique relationship that some don't understand but Tyrone said it doesn't shock him that we get along. We also have same features that tells you that we are probably related.

I call Sange and she tells me that the colours that will be used for décor in my party are Navy blue and silver grey, so when looking for a dress, I must find one that is either navy with silver heels or silver dress with navy heels. I am thinking of dying my hair, I am tired of my natural brown hair. Clara comes where I am seated, she is doing her Naomi Campbell walk. It's like there are hundreds of people watching her. I guess she is used to the runway walk.

“Big sister get up. We are going to the farm.” I look at her with a frown.

“You have a farm?”

“No silly. Grandpa owns it. He has horses, donkeys

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and a place where he plants fruits, vegetables and flowers. We are going horse riding for now, and then we are going shopping.”

“I have never rode a horse before. I don’t have time for recreational activities like that, well except for drinking. But I haven’t been drinking for a while now. Pa’s death hit me hard. I went hard on the bottle to such an extent that I had alcohol poisoning.”

“How was he?” she asks sitting down.

“A great man. He taught me so many things and I also taught him a few things. He was a villain to most but to me, he was my knight in shining armor. We were so close to such an extent that gran became jealous.” She chuckles. “He was so strict to my siblings and to mother. He didn’t approve of my dad. He said to mother, and I quote ‘He is too soft for you. You deserve a man who will protect you even when he is not there. Whose reputation and name will protect you. You can see that this one doesn’t even know how to carry a gun’.” Clara laughs out loud and I also laugh. Pa was one unique character.

“Can we go now?” she asks while standing up. I smile and stand up. “You are going with your dog?” she says pointing at Beast with her eyes who is standing a few meters away from us. I chuckle.

“Learn to not mind his presence. He can easily blend with the surroundings. Like you won’t even know that he is there.”

“But a street pole which is buffy is too hard not to notice.” I burst out laughing. I signal Beast to follow us since we are leaving and then we head to the driveway, where Clara’s driver is already waiting for us. Beast opens the doors for us, we climb inside and then he gets in the front seat.

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We get to the farm and head to the stables. There are so many horses here. We are shown the horses we will be riding and they prepare them for us. We climb on top of them and they start moving slowly. This is actually fun, considering I haven’t done something like this in a while. When we are done, we leave the farm and head to the shopping mall. We get to a boutique and we are led to a lounge.

“Can you please bring all your navy blue mermaid evening gowns which are size forty? And also silver heels which are size

thirty eight?" Clara says to the shop assistant who looks nervous.

"As you wish ma'am." She rushes away.

"Did you have to scare the poor woman?" I ask with an amused face. She just laughs.

"She is the one who chose to be intimidated. That ain't my fault sister." she answers with a smug on her face.

"I am sure it's not every day a model comes here and demands dresses and heels just like you did." she rolls her eyes.

The shop assistants come back with about 5 dresses and four heels. They wheel them to where we are seated. I stand up and take the first dress with a pair of heels and go to the fitting room with it. It's a navy blue cross bright wire backless bodycon mermaid long-sleeved dress. The heels are a peep-toe platform heels. I try these two on and I look gorgeous but I am not feeling the dress. I go back to the lounge. Clara stands up when she sees me. She studies my facial expression and she smiles.

"You are looking gorgeous and all but I can see that you are not feeling this dress." I chuckle.

“Is it that obvious?” she shakes her head.

“But you are like my twin, so I can read you. How about you try this one on?”

She hands me a strapless bodice corset long satin leg split evening dress. I take it and head back to the fitting room. I take off the one I was wearing and try on the second dress. Now I feel like myself. I actually feel like Ty’s princess. I head back to the lounge and Clara claps when she sees me.

“Now that’s what I am talking about. How about you pair them with these?” she hands me an Allover glitter décor chunky heeled sandals. The shop assistant helps me put them on. Clara screams when she sees the end result. “You look perfect.” I go to the long mirror which is situated here in the lounge and look at my reflection.

“We are talking this.” I say looking at the shop assistant. I go to change back to my clothes and they pack the items we chose.

“I am taking the first dress. We are the same size so there is no need for me to fit it.” Clara says and I just laugh. She pays for

the dresses and heels and one of the guards take them to the car.

We continue shopping and I am actually having fun because I hardly go shopping. I also buy clothes and gifts for everyone back home. Like Sange and Seipati, and my other family members and my in-laws. When we are done, we go eat at La Buchetta Food & Wine Restaurant because shopping can make you hungry. We order our food and I order juice while Clara orders wine.

“You not a fan of alcohol?” she asks.

“Not really. I am just taking this huge break from it.” She nods.

When we are done eating, we head back home and I hand gran and mother what I bought for them. I also tell Sange that I already have the dress and shoes for the party. She is ecstatic about this because she knows I am not a fan of shopping.

We have just landed in South Africa and the drivers are driving us to gran's house. It's Friday and the engagement party is tomorrow evening. I have a heist today and Sange and Seipati have planned everything. We are stealing gemstones. They are being delivered tonight at the Richards Bay port. We already have an inside source.

The gemstones are the sapphire, amethyst and tanzanite. They are very expensive and valuable. We are going to make rings, necklaces and earrings from them and sell them in the underground. Men from the underground love buying expensive jewelry for their women and daughters, so I know that we are going to make a lot of money out of them.

We are going to take the jet to Durban but we are going to drive back here after grabbing the gems so that we won't raise many suspicions. Silu wanted us to have dinner tonight but I cancelled it because I can't. We get to gran's house and find my siblings already in the lounge waiting for us. Gran does the introductions and they exchange hugs and greetings.

I jog to my room and place my luggage on top of the bed. I freshen up and get dressed in the black bulletproofed long-sleeved bodysuit which was designed by Salizwa. On top I wear black combat pants and a bicker jacket. I wear my black combat boots. I then go to my secret closes and pack my weapons and mask in my backpack. This might seem like a straight forward heist but anything can happen.

Gran gets in my room and looks at me from top to bottom. She shakes her head and unpacks my clothes. She places them carefully on my laundry basket and place the clean ones on my closet.

“Please don’t tell me you going on a heist the day before your engagement party.” She says while sitting on the edge of the bed. I sigh and sit on the couch.

“I have to grandma. It’s been so long since I went out to a mission. Relax, it’s going to be an in and out type of thing. We will be here tomorrow morning.” She shakes her head in disapproval.

“I have a bad feeling about this. It doesn’t seem right. It’s like something bad is going to happen.”

“Relax. I am The Empress. I always reign supreme and even danger is afraid of me. Nothing is going to happen to me.” I stand up and take my backpack. I switch off my phone and place it on my drawer beside my bed. I take the tablet with me. “See you soon.” I jog downstairs and quickly go outside before anyone can spot me.

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We retrieve the gems after a battle with the cops. Luckily we weren't in the battlefield. The Durban team took care of everything. We all drive to join the N3 when suddenly we hear gunshots. There are people who are shooting out cars. Luckily the cars are bullet proof but we have to take care of these insects before they alert the cops.

“I have identified one of the passengers in the cars. It's a member of Maphanta gang.” Sange says while typing something on her laptop. “I have already jammed all network connections within a 5 km radius from where we are.”

“Find a place where we can park and take care of these bugs.” I say and prepare my guns.

“There is a gravel road that lead to the farms which is 3 minutes away. We can stop there.” we are riding a Volvo xc90. I am with Sange, Salizwa, Seipati, Beast and Joe in the car. The other 4 cars are full of my gang member from Jo’burg and the other 2 have gang members from Durban. “I am informing the others so that we can all stop.”

“How many cars are following us?”

“About 10 boss.” I chuckle.

“Are we outnumbered?”

“Whenever you are in a place, we are never outnumbered boss.”

“Great answer.”

We park on the gravel road and switch off the lights. The cars approach where we are at and we start firing before they can even stop. We kill most of them and when we think they are

finished, we stand to go back to the cars. One makes a mistake of shooting me on my right hand

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in an attempt to disarm me. Beast takes care of her and Seipati attends to my wound.

I curse when I think of the excuse I am going to tell to Silu when he asks about this wound. What the hell am I going to say? Then there is gran, who told me that something will go wrong. But it's just a hand. She will be relieved to find out that only a few got injured and there weren't serious injuries. Seipati stitches me and wrap a bandage around my hand.

"Boss what do we do with these bodies and the cars?" Mpho from Durban asks.

"Load the bodies in the cars and light them up. Make sure you leave no evidence. Let's go." I say to Beast and we all get inside the cars.

--

I get home at 5 am and I head straight to my room. I undress and pack my guns neatly in their place. I then take a shower and go to sleep.

I am later woken up by noise and I can hear that there are people inside my room. Little people actually because the voices are so tiny. I open my eyes and I frown when I see Ryan and Lalia; Nomcebo and Emihle, Cole's kids. They are sitting on the couch and listening to Alwande who is telling them God knows what. I am going to kill whomever brought them to my room.

I stretch my right hand in order to snatch my phone from the drawer. I groan when I feel pain, then I remember that I am injured. The little people turn to me with smiles. They rush to my side and Nomcebo opens my drawer, she takes out my phone and hands it to me. I smile and check the time. It's already 10:30am and I still have to do my hair, nails and wax. Fuck!

"Hey auntie. What happened to your hand?" Emihle asks. She is so cute. She is 4 years old.

“I cut myself while cooking baby. Turns out I am not a pro in the kitchen.” They all laugh. “Where is granny?”

“The one who lives in this house?” Nomcebo asks and I nod. “She is somewhere in this house with the other granny from Italy. They are drinking tea. They said we should wake you up because your hairstylist is coming at 11am.”

“But we didn’t wanna wake you because you looked so beautiful while sleeping.” Lalia says and I just laugh.

“How about you guys go downstairs and make breakfast for me because I am starving?”

“OKAY!” they all shout and run out of my room.

I get out of bed and go to the bathroom. I shower and it is really difficult showering with one hand. At last I get done. I wrap a towel around my body and go back to my bedroom. I find the bed already made and gran placing a tray of food on my dressing table. She studies my body carefully and her eyes get stuck on my injured hand.

“What happened?”

“Nothing much granny. I am fine.” She grunts.

“Sit down so that I can change your bandages. And your hairstylist is already here but I told him to set up everything in the empty room downstairs.” I sit down and she heads out. Few minutes later she comes back and changes my bandages. “Next time you won’t be this lucky. Stop with this stubborn head of yours. It will get you killed one day.” She finishes dressing my hand and discard the dirty bandage. She doesn’t say anything else. She just exits my room.

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“Just dye my hair ombre dark gray. Make the edges black.” I say to the stylist and she nods. She starts doing my hair and 10 minutes later the nail artist comes in.

“How about I do your nails while waiting for the dye to sink in your hair?” the nail artist suggests and I just nod. “Which nails do you want?”

“Navy coffin shaped with silver or white beads.”

“As you wish.”

After some time, they get finished and Clara comes in. she smiles when she sees me and then showers me with compliments. We then go to a beauty salon for waxing, then Sange takes her to a salon where she will do her hair and nails. I drive to Silu's apartment. I get there and I find the place buzzing with his friends and brothers.

"Hi everyone." They all turn.

"Makoti, unjani? (How are you?)" Simlethelwe asks while coming to hug me. I hug him and smile.

"I am okay. How are you?"

"I am also fine. Your husband is sulking in the bedroom." I chuckle.

"Let me go check on him." I head to his room and I find him sleeping on his bed, his back is facing the door. "Don't tell me you are in here sleeping while you have so many guests in your house." He quickly turns and smiles when he sees me but his smile quickly fades and is replaced with a pissed face.

"I am still mad at you." I smile and go join him on the bed, taking off my sneakers.

“But you are loved. Why would you stay mad when you are loved by an Italian woman?” he chuckles.

“Is that your way of sweet talking me?”

“Is it working?” I ask wiggling my eyebrows which makes him laugh so hard because I fail at doing that.

“Maybe. Now you can kiss me and maybe we can build a bridge and get over the fact that you left me for two full weeks.” I laugh and he pouts. I turn him to lie on his back and climb on top of him. I kiss him and he kisses me back.

This place looks really amazing. Sange decided that we must do the party in gran's backyard. They hired a frame tent and the décor looks amazing. She told Silu that the rehearsal dinner will be at his home and he agreed. The guests have arrived, also Silu's family. They are all in the tent. The people who are still in the house are Sange, Clara, Silu and myself. Well the other two are in the lounge and I am in my room with Sange who is fixing me. She bought me silver stylish gloves which are really beautiful and are a wonderful cover for the bandage.

We head downstairs and Silu smiles like an idiot when his eyes land on me. He comes to hug me and plants a soft kiss on my lips. He takes my hand and leads me to the backyard. We get to the tent and people scream, ululate and cheer as soon as they see us. He is wearing a navy slim fit suit with a black shirt and black loafers, he is not wearing a tie and is wearing grey cufflinks. We head to our designated chairs and take a seat.

Simlethelwe is the master of the ceremony. He is dressed smart in a dark gray suit with navy shirt and navy dress shoes. I have never seen him in a suit before and he actually looks cute. He

takes the mic and he winks to some lady in the audience who smiles in return.

“Evening everyone. The handsome man standing in front of you is Simlethelwe Ndaba who is going to be the master of this ceremony. We are gathered here today to celebrate the engagement of the two most awesome people in my life, Miss Adriane Thompson and Mr. Silungile Ndaba. There isn’t much of a program meaning some of you will have an opportunity to pass wonderful messages to our couple. But first I’d like to call Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Ndaba and Mrs. Chiliza to come and give out congratulations.” People clap and Simi goes to sit down. Gran stands and comes to the stage.

“I greet you all and I welcome you all in my lovely home. Watching her grow, I never thought Adriane would find love and actually settle down. She was always hanging out with her grandpa and most of the time they spoke about business. I thought she would be that goal driven business woman who is all about business. But she proved me wrong. Congratulations my babies and I wish you all the best.” She goes to sit down and Silu’s mom comes to the stage.

“I am very happy to gain a second daughter in you MaMdunge. Because of you, I now get to brag that I have an Italian daughter-in-law.” We all laugh. She got bragging rights now. “I am happy for the both of you guys and I wish you all the best. I won’t talk much because I don’t wanna deplete my wedding speech.” We laugh again. She goes to sit down and mother takes the stage.

“I have wronged you my child and abandoned you for years. I am very happy that you have forgiven me and gave me a second chance. I didn’t deserve it but you opened up your heart and proved that you are not as stubborn as I am. I am very happy for you both and I wish you can have as many children as you wish. Congratulations to you both.” She goes to sit down and Sange rushes to the stage.

“Let me just start by saying you guys look gorgeous, especially Adriane.” I chuckle shaking my head. Salizwa and Seipati also join her on the stage. “I was actually worried about your dress but when you said a model is helping you to choose it, I relaxed.” Okay I think I must get ready for some roast. “I didn’t think that Adriane would fall in love. Phela this woman is cold-hearted and is very picky so I don’t know how she chose you

Silu while you are this ugly.” Silu bursts out laughing and I also laugh. Salizwa takes the mic.

“I was actually there when they first met. Silu came out of the restaurant and Adriane and I were going in. he bumped into her, causing her to drop her phone. Adriane is not a loud person but that day yoh, she turned into an angry colored woman and started swearing at him in Italian. She attracted attention to herself and people stopped to look at her but her guard scared them off. The only reason why she cursed at him is because she bought the phone the previous day and she actually loved it.” Seipati takes the mic.

“Actually grandpa Ty bought the phone for her. She didn’t even give him a chance to apologize, not that he could say anything because he was in awe. When she was done swearing at him, he just said ‘you look beautiful, can I please have your number?’ yoh that made her lose her appetite because she didn’t even enter the restaurant anymore, she just marched to her car. I am happy that I was there at the beginning of your love story and I am also here now. We wish you guys all the best and we are expecting many nephews and less nieces because we don’t a stubborn mini you boss.” I just laugh

shaking my head. They go to sit down and Simi comes to the stage again.

“Well an event isn’t an event without a little entertainment. So ladies and gentlemen put your hands together and help me welcome the amazing

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the beautiful and talented Naima Kay.”

Everyone stands up and cheers for her as she makes her way to the stage. She takes the stage and start performing her famous ‘Shayizandla’ song. Silu asks me to dance with him and I just laugh because he is making fun of me. I finally give in and we head to the dance floor. Our guests scream when they see us. We start dancing, actually we are not dancing, and we are just moving slowly. He keeps making funny faces and I am just giggling.

We go back to our seats when the song comes to an end. Naima Kay continues performing 2 other songs and people also stand to dance. When she is done, she leaves and Simi takes the stage again. Starters are served and the speeches continue.

Dinner is served. The toasting comes and Clara comes to the front.

“I have known my twin for only two weeks but it feels like I have known her my whole life. I love you babes and I wish you all the best. Now can everyone stand up with your glasses and some with the champagnes? Mr. Ndaba you will help with holding both our glasses.” We all stand up, we are holding glasses because Clara is the one who is going to pour for us.

“Now shake and pop.” Clara shakes and opens the champagne, she pour for herself, Simi, Silu and I. “Now pour but don’t drink yet. Hold your glasses up high.” We do so. “Now let’s toast, to everlasting love, happiness, joy and many kids.” We all toast and then drink. Damn it’s been so long since I have tasted alcohol, I already know that this champagne is going to throw me off.

Desert is served and then people start taking pictures. Sange comes to our table and asks us aside. She leads us to the private place where we start taking pictures. Well taking pictures is another thing that I hardly do. I don’t know how to

pose so I am just going with the flow. Sange also shows me some of the poses and I do as she says.

We head back to the tent and dance with the people in the dance floor. This has been a very successful and peaceful event. I hope my wedding will also be like this. Tyrone comes to where I am dancing with Silu and asks Silu if he can dance with me. Silu goes to dance with mother and Tyrone takes me into his arms. He has this crazy smirk that is plastered on his face.

“You are always chasing after trouble just like him.” he says and I just look at him with a frown. “I know that something happened to your hand and it isn’t just you cutting yourself while cooking.” I chuckle.

“Well he lives inside me so it shouldn’t be a surprise that I am trouble and always looking for trouble like him.”

“Just don’t bring danger to your fiancé’s life. He looks like a good young man. It would be a shame if his life ends up in danger because of you.”

“Relax grandpa. He is always safe. He is the most watched person in this country, well after the president.” He stops dancing and looks at me.

“You’re a gang queen, it doesn’t feel right when you call me grandpa. How about you call me Rone?” I laugh and he also laughs.

“To you I am just Adriane Thompson, your granddaughter. I don’t let power get in my head and make me forget the role family plays in my life.”

“Spoken like a true leader. I am sure he is proud of you wherever he is. But I am pretty sure he is in hell.” I just laugh again shaking my head.

“What’s up with you and gran? Why are you always fighting?”

“She is attracted to me, she resorts to hating me so that she doesn’t have to face her feelings.” I raise my eyebrow.

“Really?”

“Yes. I mean have you seen me?” I laugh again. This guy is very funny.

“You are right. You have that thing mann.” I indicate with my hands. He frowns.

“What is that thing?” I chuckle when I remember this man is not from here.

“It’s that thing mann, that effect that makes ladies’ legs shake or go wobbly when you appear, you know.” He smiles.

“Okay I get it now.” We stop dancing when Ana calls him aside.

The people continue the party and they are even given alcohol. I change into a navy knee length bodycon dress with silver flat sandals. I pack my overnight bag and head out to look for Silu. I find him with some of his colleagues who are already leaving. They say their goodbyes and leave. He turns and frowns when he looks at me.

“And the bag?”

“I was hoping we ditch our own party and go make a private party for two?” his frown is quickly replaced with a silly smile.

“You want me all to yourself Miss Chiliza?”

“Yes Mr. Ndaba.”

“Okay. Let’s go say goodbye to our guests and then we can leave.”

“We can just tell them that I have a headache and I wanna rest. They can continue with the party. Your brothers and my friends will take care of them.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

We head to the backyard and Silu informs Simi that we are leaving. Sange laughs and tells us straight that we are ditching them for sex. I just laugh at her comment. Silu and I get to his car and drive to his apartment. He said we are going to buy a car when we get married and I have no problem with that. We get to his apartment and sex each other in every party of the house.

The Italian family left two weeks ago. They promised to visit us next time but they also made us promise to visit them. Liam got along with Cole and my father. They were like three musketeers. Ana had this crazy relationship with Jenna, but it's good to know that they weren't gossiping about anybody, just bonding nje. Clara was also close with Anathi. Anathi even took him clubbing at Club Classic. Most of her fans went crazy, the guards were forced to protect her.

She is really doing well for herself. A week ago she was in Miami. She is a model for Victoria's Lingerie. She also take some gigs on the outside. She has appeared on London fashion week. I am very proud of her. Even though it will take her a decade or so to reach my level of wealth, she will get there. I believe in her.

I am sitting at the warehouse just sipping on whiskey. I am not back on alcohol fully but I missed whiskey so excuse me guys. Sange gets in my office while typing something on her tablet. She has this frown on her face, like something is wrong. She places the iPad on the table and take my laptop. She types for a

few minutes and I keep quiet because I know better than to disturb her.

“Something is not right.” She finally says. I sit up straight and give her my undivided attention.

“What is it?”

“I have lost Silungile. I can’t find him. His tracker has just been disabled.” I put the glass on the table and stand up quickly.

“I am sorry what?”

“I think he has been kidnapped.”

“Fuck. This is not happening.”

I head to my library which leads to my secret computer room. I go to the folder where the second trackers are tracked at. They are not visible. They are micro and they emerge with the human cells. They are harmless. I inject them with an injection. I press a few buttons and I get Silu’s location. But his tracker is flashing orange, meaning he is harmed.

Blue or green means you are alive

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well and unarmed. Pink or orange means you are injured and in danger. Red means that you are in a critical condition and black simply means you are dead. I am relieved that Silu is still alive. But my problem is that he already knows who I am and I am screwed because he is going to be so mad at me. I hope he forgives me because I can't live without him.

I quickly send his exact location to Sange's iPad. I then lock my secret room and then head back to my office.

"First we have to find out who took him and why. We can't go in there without full knowledge of what we are up against." I say to my crew who are pacing up and down.

"I am waiting on Muriel to send me a footage of his last seen place. Maybe we can see who kidnapped him and take it from there." Sange says.

"Clearly that person is undermining you and doesn't know who you are." Salizwa says.

"I think they know who exactly you are and this is personal." Seipati says.

“Disable all the trackers and change the codes. They must have figured out about his first tracker and they may have your exact location as we speak.”

“On it boss.” Salizwa says typing on her laptop. Kamva and Muriel make their way in my office.

“Kamva delete the old codes and create new ones. There must be a reason why Silu was taken and we were not aware of it up until the last minute. Someone knows about his first tracker. Our system is not easy to override.”

“Sure boss.” He says while getting busy on his laptop.

“I have the exact location where they are keeping him. It’s an abandoned warehouse just outside Meadowlands.” Sange says. At least I have one less thing to worry about.

“It’s the Mozambicans boss. They are now paid by Bo’s mistress, Shreya Alich. He left her with nothing so this is her revenge. She wants you to sign over all your assets to her. She has about 20 men inside the building and 15 surrounding the area.” Muriel says.

“What do we know about this Shreya?”

“She is 27 years old. Have a 9 year old son with Bo. She lives with both her parents. Also she is bipolar.” Seipati says.

“Get our men in Mozambique to snatch them now, not tomorrow. I am going to make her regret coming to South Africa.”

“Yes boss.” She takes out her phone and goes outside talking to someone.

“Is there an inside person this time around?”

“Not that we know of boss. Are we going to Meadowlands now?” Kamva asks.

“No. we are going to make our move as soon as we get our hands on Shreya’s family.” I say and take my phone and car keys. “You guys have an hour to get everything in order. I am headed home, I will come back in a few.”

I drive to my house and don’t even kill the engine when I climb out. I run to my room and get dressed in my bulletproofed bodysuit. I wear black tracksuits on top and wear black sneakers. I take the backpack which is full of my weapons and load a whole more. Gran makes her way to my room.

“What is it honey? The maids tell me that you were running to your room looking in distress.”

“Someone has Silu gogo. It’s Bo’s mistress. She wants me to sign over my assets to her. It’s her way of revenge. I have to save him gogo. I know that woman will fill his mind with venom and he won’t look at me the same affectionate way as he did before but I have to save him.” I say speaking so quickly, I can hardly hear myself. As much as I know I am going to rescue him, I am scared for his life. What if they beat him to a pulp? Or stab him? Or even shoot him?

“You are going to fuck up Mzukulu. You are going to make mistakes if you are this nervous. Sit down, I am going to give you something to drink.” I nod and sit down. She leaves and comes back with a cup. “Drink this. It will help you calm down and think straight.” I drink the water and I feel myself calming down instantly.

“I am going to kill them all gogo and no one is going to live to tell the tale.”

“Kill them all Empress.”

I stand up, take my bags and head out. I drive back to the warehouse and find everyone looking ready for battle. I head to my office and find my crew pacing up and down.

“What’s new?”

“They have got Shreya’s family and they are already at the warehouse.” Seipati responds.

“Any message from Shreya?”

“Not yet. I think she thinks you haven’t discovered that Silu is missing.” Salizwa says.

“Let’s go. She has lived a very long life. It’s time for her to go back to where she came from.” I say taking my iPad.

Chapter 20

SILUNGILE NDABA

I was coming out of University of Johannesburg lab. I was asked for some advice so I went there. Just as I was heading to my car, some men in jumped me and before I could say anything, they injected me with something on my neck. I felt my body getting heavy and it was lights out for me.

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I woke up and when I tried to stretch my arms, I felt restrained and then I remembered that I was abducted or kidnapped or whatever. I looked around and saw that I was in a very dirty place. There is dust, papers and cardboards everywhere. There are at least about 10 men who are armed and there is a woman who is busy giving them orders. She turns and smiles when she sees that I am awake.

“Good our guest is awake. What would you like to drink?” she is still smiling. If I didn’t know better, I’d say there are some loose screws on her head. I just keep quiet and stare at her. “Not much of a talker are you? Me either but I love to vent. But before that, boys how about you roughen him up a little?” the guards smile and then come to me.

Punches are followed by punches as they beat me. They not only punch my face but every reachable place in my body. The pain I am feeling is excruciating. The most painful part is that I don’t even know what I have done to deserve this. Why am I even here? Maybe they got the wrong person. “You got the wrong person.” I utter those words, even though my mouth is full of blood right now, in an attempt to save myself.

“Enough boys.” The woman says and they stop and back up. She takes a chair and sit in front of me. She is still smiling. I think she is bipolar or something.

“I am Shreya by the way. You must be wondering why you here. Well it’s all because of you fiancé who thinks she is above the world just because she has many connections.” I just frown and look at her. “You don’t know that you are dating the Empress?”

she asks with an amused expression. I just give her a blank stare. She takes that as an answer and she continues. “This is going to be fun. Well let me give you the profile of your future wife.”

“Adriane Oyintando Thompson. Daughter of Thabisa and Nkateko Chiliza. Granddaughter of the famous late mafia king, King Ty, who by the way killed both your grandparents after they stole from him. She inherited most of his things, including the crime business but doesn’t have all the powers over it since

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apparently, she hasn’t reached the right age of ruling the South African Mafia. She is the leader of the gang called The Cobras, a gang which she formed at the age of 18 years.”

“You are dating one of the most dangerous female in South Africa and she doesn’t even trust you enough to tell you what she really is. Talk about a relationship without trust.” She laughs shaking her head. I don’t believe a word she is saying. My Oyintando is very kind, loving and honest.

“You are lying. What exactly do you want Shreya?”

“I thought only Mozambicans are this stubborn but I guess I was wrong. Here is the proof that you want. Guards pass me my laptop.” They give her a laptop and she starts typing something on it. She then turns it to my direction. I bend a little to get a better view. I nearly puke when I see the woman I love chopping someone’s body parts and she is smiling while doing it. What the hell is this?

“That is the woman you are about to marry, the woman who will bear you kids and grow old with you. You sure know how to pick a wife. She killed my baby daddy and also his family. She is heartless and only cares about herself. Her friends, as you know them, work for her and they are assassins and street fighters. Are you sure you wanna build a home with someone like that?”

I keep quiet and just stare at her. Why did my fiancé have to be a monster? I don’t care about what her grandpa did because she surely was young and didn’t know what he did. Why did she have to be a crime lady? Why didn’t she trust me enough to let me know about who she really is? I am very mad with her and I don’t think I wanna build a home with someone who doesn’t trust me enough to tell me about her other life.

“Boss the outside men are not responding.” One of the guards inform Shreya. She smiles.

“Looks like your fiancé is here. She is early though because I still wanted to play with you.”

Men surrounding start falling like insects. I guess there are snipers by the windows who are shooting at the guards. When there at least about four men left, the door opens and Adriane comes in with Salizwa and Seipati on her sides. Sange is behind them.

“Well, well, well. If it isn’t the famous Empress in the house. Welcome to my secret layer. Well I guess it’s no longer secret because you know about it.” Shreya says smiling and she takes out a gun and points at my head. Adriane looks at me and I don’t see the woman I fell for. Her look isn’t warm and welcoming. It’s just cold and reserved. She then looks at Shreya with a smug.

“You never had the upper hand in this situation Shreya. You lost the little power you had the minute you stepped into my territory.” She says and step closer to her. Sange hands her the iPad and she taps on it a few seconds and then smiles.

“You wanna transfer your assets right now? Smart move.” Shreya says but you can hear in her voice that she is no longer as confident as she was a few minutes ago.

“You have thirty seconds to release him and gain your freedom and little dignity. After that I am going to release you. You are going to leave South Africa and forget about your silly revenge plan or you can choose the second option which will end with you losing your life and your family following you.” Adriane says.

“By the way, I have your family in my warehouse in Chigubo.”

“You are bluffing.” Shreya says, her voice is shaking.

“You wanna find out?”

“I already know that you won’t let me go so...” a gunshot goes off and I feel excruciating pain emanating from my stomach. I release a rough groan. Another gunshot goes off and I hear something falling to the floor.

“You are going to regret this.” I hear Adriane’s voice but it’s drifting away slowly. I feel my eyes getting heavy and darkness just emerges.

The doctors at the medic warehouse are still operating him. He lost a lot of blood and I went in shock when I saw him lose consciousness. Salizwa quickly shot Shreya in the hand to disarm her. She is at the warehouse and I will deal with her when Silu has woken up. I am afraid that I arrived too late and Shreya had already told him about the empress.

Well I gave out an order for the men in Mozambique to finish off Shreya's family. I don't want loose ends like Shreya coming after me in a few years. I told gran about Silu and she said she is keeping him in her prayers. I didn't tell his parents though because they would ask many questions and him being here instead of a normal hospital would raise many suspicions.

The gang is all quiet and seems like they are walking on eggshells. I guess they are too afraid to say anything as they don't know my exact mood. Gran and mother enter the waiting room where we are seated and they rush to my side. They sit next to me and mother takes me into her arms while gran is brushing my hands.

"Let me deal with her baby." Gran says and I shake my head.

“I wanna deal with her myself gran and I will do that when Silu is awake.”

“Did she succeed in telling Silungile about The Empress?” mom asks and I nod. “It’s going to be alright baby. If you guys are meant to be, everything will be alright.”

“I doubt mother. I am sure he thinks I don’t trust him.”

“But I did tell you to tell him in time. If you did, then we wouldn’t be here not knowing if the wedding is still on or not. I also think you should tell his parents about this. I would be very pissed if any of you were lying in a hospital and I am unaware of that.”

“But gran...”

“No Adriane. I am going to tell them and I am going to think of a story I am going to come up with. Maybe I will just say this hospital has the best doctors in the world or something like that.” she stands up and heads out.

“She is right Ntando. He needs his family at a time like this and they wouldn’t forgive you if they were to find out that you knew about this and didn’t tell them.”

“Mother them knowing means they are also about to find out that pa killed Silu’s grandparents.”

“They don’t have to know that. But if they find out, then it’s that. But it’s not your fault that dad killed his grandparents. They were thieves and they deserved it.”

“Please don’t say that in the family meeting.” She laughs and I also laugh.

“Relax I won’t.”

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He gained consciousness a few hours ago. The doctors are busy with him. It has been 4 days since he has been admitted. Gran did handle Silu’s parents and they had less questions but his mother has been praying day and night for his recovery. His older brother is coming tonight. The other one couldn’t come because he got the biggest cooking gig, a chance for a reality show and his parents told him that he should go there, they will update him on Silu’s recovery.

I have been a walking zombie. The only time I come alive is when I head to the warehouse to torture Shreya. On the first day she pissed me off, I ended up stitching her mouth because

some of the words that she were saying pierced through my heart. I have been torturing and feeding her drugs so that she doesn't die. I will kill her once I have talked to Silu. Her death will be determined by the end result of my talk with Silu.

While wallowing in my thoughts, my phone rings. It's the CEO of Thompson Marketing. I am in my office at the medic warehouse. I am waiting for the doctors to give me a go ahead to see Silu.

"Thompson."

"Miss Thompson, I am sorry to bother you but we have a crisis that needs your attention. If it wasn't this important

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I wouldn't have called you." I sigh.

"When should I come?"

"Now if possible." I stand up and take my bike keys.

"Just so you know, I am not going to take you disturbing my peace lightly."

“I know boss.” I hang up and head to the waiting room where my gran and mother is sitting with the Ndaba family.

“You look like you are heading out.” mother says. I huff.

“I have an emergency that I have to attend at TM. They need me. I will be back as soon as I am done.”

“Okay baby. We will update you.” Gran says. I nod and head out.

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I get to TM and head to the main boardroom. I find most of the staff inside. I take a seat and the CEO stands up.

“We are on the brink of losing the biggest client we have ever got here at TM. A group of employees made an advertisement for them and because they trust TM, they just released it to the public without checking its flaws. It received a very negative response from the public and many people were offended by it. We pleaded that they not sue us, so they gave us until 00:00 tomorrow to correct our wrongs.”

“Which company was it and what was the advertisement about?” I ask.

“Nivea. It was an ad about a cream that removes stretch marks and cellulite. The wording and phrases was too wrong. It was like the ad was saying it’s a crime or a bad thing to have stretch marks, like you are an abomination or you are not normal. The women are furious and they are even saying they will never use any other Nivea product again.” I sigh.

“Who are those employees who created the ad?”

“Miss Ndlala, Miss Pina, Mr. Nzama and Mr. Lira.” The marketing director says.

“How long have they been in this company?”

“For a year now Miss Thompson.” One of the ladies say.

“And you are?” “Miss Pina.”

“All of you leave, except for Kalu, Mdingwa, Mlungwana and Nowalk.” The others rush out. “We are all not leaving her until we come finish this ad. Get your PAs to order us food and energy drinks because it is going to be a long night.” I say taking off my jacket.

The following morning I shower, get dressed and head to the medic warehouse. I find Silu eating his breakfast while reading a newspaper. I clear my throat and he turns to stare at me.

“How are you?”

“I was shot because of my gangster fiancé, how do you think I am?”

“Please don’t call me a gangster because I am not one.” He chuckles and closes his newspaper.

“Enlighten me then Empress, or you are going to tell me more lies.”

“But I have never lied to you before. Just that I was scared to tell you about this other part of me because I was avoiding disappointment and judgment from your side. I can’t stand it.”

“I don’t care if you are a gang leader or a stripper or whatever. My problem is that you don’t trust me Adriane. We have been together for so long we were even set to be married in a few

months but that still didn't make you trust me enough to tell me about your other life." I keep quiet starring at the ground. "Tell me, when were you planning on telling me about Empress?"

"Before the wedding." He chuckles angrily.

"Don't lie Adriane. This is not time for lies. When?"

"I don't know. I was scared that you were going to leave Me." he huffs.

"What an excuse. Listen I didn't care about what went down between our grandparents but the fact that there is no trust in our relationship means that it is not going to work. I mean what is marriage without trust?"

"We can work on that."

"You mean you can work on that? Because you are the one with trust issues not me."

"No, we can because we are in this together." He breathes out loudly.

“I have to rest. Can you please leave?”

“Is the wedding still on?”

“How can you commit yourself to someone you don’t trust? You are smarter than that Adriane.” He turns back to reading his newspaper. I look at him for a few minutes and then head out. Shreya today is your death day.

--

I get to the warehouse and tell everyone to wait outside. I go to the room where Shreya is being kept. I drag her to the slaughter room. I wear scrubs and gloves. I take all the medical equipment that doctors use in theater rooms and place them on the operation table. I carry Shreya and also place her on the operation table. She is still conscious and she is looking at me with begging eyes. Surely she is begging me to make her death quick and less painful because she has suffered enough but I am not about to grant her that today.

I cut her open and start by taking off her heart followed by her lungs

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liver and kidneys. I place them in a container that can prolong them. I know that Salizwa is going to make so much money with these in the black market. Shreya is already dead, so I carry her useless body and toss it in the bath tub that is full of flesh eating acid.

RIP SHREYA. IN YOUR NEXT LIFE, LEARN TO STAY IN YOUR LANE.

--

My phone rings waking me up from my sleep. After killing Shreya, I went home, showered and just drifted to sleep. It's already in the afternoon. I wonder why gran hasn't woken me up yet. I check the caller ID and I sigh when I see who is calling.

"Talk."

"Boss I have already found buyers for all the organs you gave me today."

"Good job Salizwa. Anything else?"

"Are you okay?" I sigh and sit up straight.

"He broke up with me. His main reason was he can't continue a relationship with someone who doesn't trust him."

“I am sorry boss. Should we go and talk to him?”

“No it’s okay. Let him be. I will try talking to him again after a week or so. I don’t wanna pester him.” she sighs.

“Do you need some comfort food to cheer you up?” I chuckle.

“I could use some whiskey right now.”

“Say no more.” She hangs up and I just laugh.

--

I head downstairs after freshening up and find mom watching TV with gran. I sit down on the couch and stare at mom.

“I don’t mean to sound rude mother but when are you going back home? When are you guys fixing your marriage with father? Or are you divorcing him?” she sighs and turns her attention to me.

“I don’t know Ntando. I don’t know if I should divorce him or go back to him and accept his second wife. I really don’t know what to do.”

“Follow your hear mother and don’t stay because of ‘the children’. All your children are old enough to understand what is going on between you two. Take a decision that you are okay and comfortable with. If you are undecided then go see a marriage counsellor.”

“Thank you baby.”

“He dumped you, didn’t he? You wouldn’t be a motivational speaker like this if he didn’t.” gran says.

“He did not necessarily dump me gran. He said he doesn’t think a marriage without trust is going to work because he feels like we lack trust. I didn’t trust him enough to tell him about Empress. I am just giving him some time to breathe then I will go back and try to fix our marriage.”

“All the best love. What would you say if he tells you to quit gangsterism?”

“I will tell him that he should stop using the drug he is using because it is making him delusional.” They both laugh and I chuckle.

“Spoken like a true Thompson.” Mother says.

I have given him enough time really. It has been two weeks since I last saw Silu and since our last intense talk. Today I am going to his apartment. He was discharged a few weeks ago. I finish dressing up and head to my bike. I climb it, put on my helmet, start the car and drive off.

I get to his house and head inside. I have the keys to the gate and door obviously. I get to the lounge and found the TV on, which means he is at the kitchen or at the toilet. I head to the kitchen first and find him cooking something on the stove. He is barefoot and is only wearing boxers.

“Hi.” I greet him. He doesn’t even turn.

“What brings you here Adriane?” I cringe. Ever since the Shreya saga, he has been calling me Adriane and it hurts because I am not used to him calling me that.

“Is it a crime to check up on my fiancé?”

“The one you haven’t seen in two weeks?”

“I was giving you some space.”

“You always assume when it comes to me neh? You kept your other identity from me because you assumed that I will somehow dump you. You didn’t come to see me because you assumed I needed bloody space. Dammit Adriane!” he bangs the stove and the pot nearly jumps.

“You are going to hurt yourself.” I say going closer to him. He turns to look at me.

“You care about me, how nice.” He says sarcastically.

“But what was I supposed to do? You were so cold at me at the hospital.” I sulk.

“Maybe we need some time apart so that we can figure out what we really want.” He says leaning on the counter.

“No you don’t mean that. We had time apart. These past two weeks is enough. Don’t make me go through that again. Please.” He turns to give attention to his pot and then turns off the stove.

“Let’s go sit down so that we can talk.” I hate talking but if I need to talk in order to save my marriage then so be it. We head to the lounge and sit on opposite couches. “How about you formally re introduce yourself?” I chuckle.

“Adriane Thompson, 24 years old. Business woman and leader of the Cobras. Member of the Italian cartel and a future mafia queen of the South African Mafia.” He chuckles.

“Future? Meaning you are not willing to leave the game?”

“It’s not the game to me. It’s my life. It’s also my legacy. I can’t run away from it. I love the person I am when I am the Empress.”

“You love ruling

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being disconnected from humanity, violence, bloodshed and blood money?”

“It ain’t about the money. It’s more about the power and respect. Many respect and fear me because of the name I have created for myself. I can’t just run away from that. You

wouldn't understand. It's like a drug. Once you have a taste, you just keep coming back for more."

"And that's the life you wanna live? You wanna be the Empress and also be a family woman? A wife? A mother?"

"Who said I can't have it all?"

"Regina Hall on Girls' Trip." I chuckle. We both love that movie. "I got kidnapped, beaten up and shot because of your lifestyle. It's dangerous. How am I supposed to relax and bring kids to this relationship when we will always be endangered by your lifestyle?"

"But we dated for like three years and nothing happened."

"Until another crazy Shreya comes for revenge? What did you do to her and her family by the way?" I keep quiet and look down. "You killed them all, didn't you?"

"I didn't have a choice. They were also going to come after me just like Shreya did. In our line of business, we never leave loose ends." He chuckles.

"Loose ends? People's lives are loose ends? Wow."

“You are judging me right now and this is what I was afraid of.”

“I am not judging you. I am just trying to understand how taking another person’s life can be this easy for you. How many people have you killed?”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“It fucken does to me. How many?”

“I don’t count.”

“Wow. Please leave.”

“No babe. We can work this out. I love you and you love me. We can make our marriage work.”

“You are a cold blooded murderer and you are not even ashamed of that. You don’t even show remorse. What kind of a woman are you?”

“Babe...”

“Get out.”

“But...”

“Get the fuck out Adriane. I don’t ever wanna see you and the wedding is off.”

“You don’t mean that.”

“Oww but I do. Just leave.” I sit and don’t move. “I SAID LEAVE NOW!” He shouts. I swallow a lump in my throat and stand up.

“Leave my keys.” I place his keys on the coffee table. I look at him one more time and then head out.

This is exactly what I was running away from. I knew that he was going to dump me because of the person I am. What I know is that he is my soul mate and I am nothing without him.

!!!HEADLINES!!!

‘BUSINESS TYCOON EDWARD DINHA WHO WAS SUSPECTED FOR RAPING HIS NIECE WAS ASSASINATED AT HIS HOME IN NORTH CLIFF. THE POLICE SUSPECT A SKILLED ASSASIN BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT CAN HELP THEM IN FINDING THE KILLER!’

‘MINISTER OF FINANCE THAPELO LEREMI WHO WAS ACCUSED OF KILLING HIS WIFE AFTER SHE ALLEGEDLY CHEATED ON HIM WITH HIS BROTHER WAS ASSASINATED IN HIS OFFICE IN PRETORIA!’

‘HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER TEBOGO MUTAPA WHO WAS ACCUSED OF RAPING A MINOR BOY WAS FOUND DEAD IN HER CAR WHEN SHE WAS ON HER WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL!’

‘DOCTOR ABEDNIGO MUSASA AND NURSE DIANA POTGIETER FROM JOBURG GENERAL WHO HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF STEALING NEW BORNES AND SELLING THEM ON THE BLACK MARKET WERE FOUND DEAD OUTSIDE A RESTAURANT IN MIDRAND!’

Salizwa sat down feeling defeated and powerless. Sange was drinking whiskey, actually drowning in her own sorrows. Seipati was stuffing her face with food because that is what she usually does when she is stressed. Instead of going hard on the bottle, she always eat junk food.

“This shit is fucked up and problem is the numbers keep increasing daily.” Sange said rubbing her face.

“Things would’ve been better if we knew where she is.” Seipati said getting more frustrated.

After the talk Silu had with Adriane calling off the wedding, he left heading to a remote island because the minute he landed there, his tracker was disabled. Adriane went off the grid after not being able to track Silu and bodies have been piling up ever since she went off the grid. They know it’s her because the assassination method is her style.

Sange’s phone rang and she huffed when she saw who was calling. She rejected the call. Seipati looked at her.

“Who is that?” she asked her.

“Silu’s brother.” Sange answered.

“You guys are an item?”

“Not really but he knows about the gang. I think he is in a gang or something. It’s just that I haven’t had time to run a background check on him. My head is just all over the place and you know how I can’t function when something is wrong. I just shut down.”

“Go to my apartment and get some sleep there.” Salizwa handed her the apartment keys. Sange took them and stood up. “Just get 8 hours of sleep. I know after that your head will be buzzing with ideas and maybe you can even find a way to track Silu because it looks like we need him back in order to fish Adriane out of her hiding place.” Sange nodded and headed out.

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It has been a month since Adriane told her family and friends that the wedding is off. She called them to a meeting and addressed them. Jenna being Jenna made a silly comment which almost landed her in the mortuary.

Thabisa and Nkateko talked about the second wife issue and Thabisa said that he can only take the second wife after a year. Meaning during this current year he has to focus on his first family and his wife. Give her love and affection before wanting to bring a third person in their marriage. Nkateko agreed to Thabisa's terms but he knew that he would see his mistress in secret.

Nkateko went to his other house in Ermelo where his mistress and children loved. He got there and found them eating dinner. The kids were excited to see him and jumped into his arms excitedly because it has been weeks since they last saw and spoke to him.

"Daddy, you're here." Likhona said hugging him tightly.

"I missed you so much dad." Liyana said.

"Okay how about you let your father sit down before you break his back?" Avuyile said coming to his rescue. Nkateko smiled and winked at her. She blushed while looking down.

“Let’s all sit down and enjoy the delicious dinner that your mother have prepared.” He said taking a seat. His daughters also went back to their seats. “How are you my darling?” he asked Avuyile who was now dishing for him. She handed him his plate and sat down.

“Surviving.”

“We are going to get married next year. For now after finding my daughter

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I am going to send my family to pay ilobolo and damages to your family.” Avuyile smiled widely.

“That’s good to hear. You still haven’t found Ntando yet?” he shook his head while chewing on his food. “I am sure she is safe wherever she is. She is just going through a lot with the break up and all.”

“There is something we need to talk about but not now. We will when we are in our bedroom.” Avuyile smiled and nodded.

Nkateko told his mother in law that he wanted to tell Avuyile the truth about Ntando since she is going to be part of the family for a long time. Thabile gave him the truth serum so that he can know if he can really trust Avuyile with his family secrets. He brought it with him and he was planning on pouring it on her juice or coffee.

They finished eating dinner and watched TV for a while. They Nkateko went and put his daughters in bed. He read them a bedtime story and they fell asleep within a few minutes. He kissed them good night and headed to the lounge. He found Avuyile switching off the TV.

“How about you go prepare for bed while I make some tea for you?” Nkateko suggested and Avuyile smiled.

“Okay don’t take too long.” She went to their room while Nkateko went to the kitchen.

He made the tea for her just how she likes it. He then poured the truth serum in it. He stirred it and then took a muffin from the muffins tray and went to the bedroom. He found her already in bed reading a novel.

“Please don’t tell me you are reading a novel about lingerie.”
He said seeing the title of the book which said ‘Fantasy in Lingerie’. She laughed.

“My love it’s not about lingerie. Well the women in it do wear lingerie but it’s a dark romance novel.”

“Say no more.” He said handing her the tea. He took off his clothes and was left with only briefs. Avuyile drank her tea and she smiled when because it was exactly the way she likes it.

“Thanks for the tea.” Nkateko climbed into the bed.

“My pleasure. You know how much I love you right?” she smiled.

“You tell me that every day and you have just showed me how serious you love me because you are willing to marry me.”

“Never doubt my love for you and please, when time comes, never compare yourself with my first wife because I love you both in a different way.”

“But you have spent more than twenty years with her.” She said sulking and Nkateko smiled.

“Let that not bother you.” She finished drinking her tea and snuggled herself next to him.

“My mother hates you because you are married. She also sometimes call me a home wrecker but I have told her over and over that I am not with you because of your money or the kids. The heart wants what it wants, and it wants you.” He smiled because he could see that truth serum is working. She hardly discuss her family with him.

“How about your father?”

“Dad doesn’t care, as long as I won’t end up like those women who have multiple kids and still stay at home because their baby daddies don’t wanna make them their wives.”

“How much do you love me baby?” she chuckled.

“My love for you is infinity times infinity. Seas may rise and skies may fall but the love I have for you will never fade or die.” He brought her to sit on top of him and kissed her.

“I love you so much.” He said breaking the kiss. “There is something you need to know about Ntando.” He said looking straight in her eyes. “She is a gang leader and the reason why she broke up with Silungile is that he was kidnapped by her enemy. The enemy was the one who told him that Ntando is a gang leader. He was upset because Ntando didn’t trust him enough to tell him the truth about her.” Avuyile’s eyes popped out.

“So she like Harriet Khoza?” Nkateko laughed and nodded. “So cool. When she comes back tell her to recruit me.” Nkateko frowned and Avuyile laughed. “Just kidding love. I have always wondered why I find her mysterious, like she is always quiet and hardly talks. I guess it comes with the package of being a gang leader. You have to be detached to your humanity a lot.”

“You have no problem with her being a gangster?” she nodded.

“She chose this path and she has her reasons. I have no right to judge her. And I love you so I have to accept that this is also part of your baggage that you come with. I love you.” She perked his lips.

“I love you too.”

Jenna was sitting at the bathtub in one of the suites on the hotel that Adriane works in. she was crying and thinking about her life. Her mind drifted to her sister. She didn't really hate her sister but she envied her. Adriane always spoke her mind and nobody dared to bully her or make her do things she didn't want to.

She tried standing up from the bathtub because the water was getting cold but it proved to be a difficult task because her body was sore and aching. She didn't know why she was still with his boyfriend who beat her up most of the time. But she did know that she wanted stability and her boyfriend spoiled her but mostly after he had beat her up.

She got out of the bathtub and wrapped a towel around her body. She looked at her reflection in the bathroom mirror. She has a blue eye, scratches and whatever wounds you can think of in her body. She sighed wiping her hears and went to the bedroom. She put on her tracksuits with fluffy socks and went to make hot chocolate in the kitchen.

She sat in the lounge drinking and just staring into space. Within a few minutes, the suite door opened and her boyfriend made his way in looking very drunk. She sighed because she knew that he was about to start argument which will lead to him beating her up.

“You look beautiful honey.” He said sitting next to her.

“Thanks.”

“I want you to do something very small for me. I want you to go to your sister’s safe in her office and steal her money and give it to me. In that way I can buy you that beautiful bag you have always wanted.” He said smiling. Jenna knew that she would never cross her sister because Adriane would really kill her. She doesn’t play when it comes to money. She gave him the first response that came to her mind.

“She doesn’t keep cash in the safe that is in her office. She is too smart for that.” he back slapped her and clicked his tongue in annoyance.

“You are useless. I should’ve dated your sister because maybe I would be somewhere in life rather than being here and being poor with your useless flat ass.” Jenna sniffed and wiped her tears.

“You have 30 seconds to leave this suite alive coward.” Adriane said standing at the door way.

“Ahh the rich sister. Come here. Maybe you will fulfil my needs unlike your useless stupid sister.” Jenna’s boyfriend said standing up and making his way to Adriane. Adriane raised her gun and shot him 3 times on the chest. He fell down and there was silence in the room. She took out her phone and sent a message to her contact to come and take out this trash.

“Come, I will drop you off at the medic warehouse.” Jenna sat there not moving, still shocked about the scene before her. Adriane huffed and went to her. She pulled her up and together they made their way out of the hotel using a secret exit.

They got into her bike and she drive off. She arrived at the medic warehouse gate but she didn’t get off the bike.

“Go inside. They know you so they will help you without asking any questions.” Jenna got off the bike and Adriane drove off in speed.

“Thank you baby sis.” She said in a whisper. She then went inside and the guards let her in without a hassle. When the nurses saw her

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they quickly came with a stretcher and took her into one of the yards and started treating her.

Adriane sent a text to Thabile about Jenna’s whereabouts and the reason why she is there. She then switched off her cellphone and continued with her mission.

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Salizwa, Seipati and Sange made their way inside the medic warehouse. One of the doctors informed them that Adriane’s sister was admitted. They went straight to Jenna’s ward and found her eating while watching the TV. They entered the ward and sat on the couches. Jenna looked at them and then turned to look at the TV again.

“Where is she?” asked Seipati. Jenna shrugged.

“I don’t know. She just showed up in my suite, killed my boyfriend and dropped me off her. She only said two sentences to me. She left soon after dropping me.” Sange sighed and looked up the ceiling as if searching for answers.

“Why did she kill your boyfriend?” Seipati asked again. The other two were not even interested in Jenna, they just wanted to know Adriane’s whereabouts.

“He was abusing me emotionally and physically and sometimes sexually. I guess Adriane found out. He was just telling me that I must steal money from Adriane which is kept in the safe. I told him that she doesn’t keep the money in her office. He said I was useless and started hitting me again.” She said sniffing.

Seipati went to her and hugged her. She started sobbing. Salizwa stood up and headed out because she despises tears.

“You are going to be fine. He is dead now. He can’t harm you.” Seipati said comforting him. Thabisa and Thabile made their way in the yard followed by Nkateko. Seipati broke the hug. They all exchanged greetings and Sange and Seipati headed out.

“Baby are you okay?” Thabisa asked hugging her.

“I am fine ma. All thanks to Adriane.”

“What are you talking about?” Thabile asked sitting down.

“She saved my life. I am forever indebted to her.”

“How did she save your life? Were you in trouble?” Nkateko asked while sitting next to her and side hugging her.

“I was dating this other guy who was abusive. He nearly killed me but Adriane got there in time and killed him.”

“By abusive, what do you mean?” Thabisa asked frowning.

“Emotionally, physically and sexually.” Nkateko stood up pacing up and down.

“Why would you stay with someone like that? Are you crazy Jenna? What if he killed you and buried you where we wouldn’t find you? How could you have not told anyone about this?” Nkateko shouted.

“Calm down Mdunge. It’s fine now. Everything will be okay.” Thabisa said calming him down while brushing his chest. Nkateko chuckled.

“That’s not going to work.” He said.

“Really now?” she asked with a smirk while looking at him. He laughed.

“Are you seriously going to be all lovey-dovey in my presence? Like really?” Thabile asked. Jenna just chuckled shaking her head.

“I know a way to get her back.” Sange said while drinking wine. She was on her third glass now and was feeling tipsy. That was the main reason why she was drinking because things were still not good. The second month was coming to an end and there still wasn’t a sign of Adriane but the number of the killings were still increasing. She was not targeting gang leaders.

“Is it you speaking or it’s the wine?” Salizwa asked. They were in their house. They stayed together in a modern house in Fourways. Salizwa was cooking while Seipati was cleaning the fridge. Sange was just sitting on the barstool drinking with an iPad in front of her.

“You know alcohol doesn’t make me say silly stuff.” She said tapping on her iPad furiously.

“Okay then. Let’s hear your brilliant idea.” Seipati said.

“Clara. She is the secret weapon. Clara is like Adriane, okay with a better fashion sense, but she is Adriane’s twin. They think alike. They are like the same person. She can find out where Adriane is.”

“That can work but if it doesn’t, we are dragging Silu out of that island. Honestly the statistics are too much now. She has broken my record.” Salizwa said pouting and the other two just laughed at her.

“Okay let me call her.” Sange said and headed to the lounge to take her phone.

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Few days later Clara landed at the airport. Sange, Salizwa and Seipati were already waiting for her. They exchanged greetings and then led her to the car. They hadn’t told her why they asked her to come. They drive to their house. They get inside and serve her wine.

“Okay. Why am I here and where is Adriane?” Clara asked while sipping her wine.

“She has been missing for almost two months now.” Seipati said. Clara nearly choked on her wine. Her eyes popped out.

“I guess that’s why she has been sending texts once a week. What happened? I have been so busy with the fashion shows from Miami to Milan. I hadn’t had time to do a lot of stuff.”

“She broke up with Silu after he was kidnapped because of her.” Seipati replied.

“After that she left?”

“No. Silu left first, then his tracker was undetectable. After that Adriane went off the grid and has been killing people fast like flies for this whole period.” Salizwa said. Clara swallowed hard.

“If you were in her shoes, where would you be hiding?” Sange asked.

“Can I shower first? I will answer you.” Clara said. Salizwa stood up and led her to the guest bedroom.

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“If I were her

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I would probably be hiding in plain sight. Not necessarily hide. Just go to some place where nobody would think of searching

for me.” Clara said while making her way down the stairs. The ladies were sitting at the lounge watching TV.

“What place would that be?” Seipati said.

“I will think about it. Can you please drive me to gran’s house?” she was already carrying her handbag.

“Okay let’s go. I am pretty sure there are fresh baked goods. You can never separate that woman with the kitchen.” They all laughed. They got out of the house and climbed into the car. Salizwa was the one driving. They got to the house and gran was so happy to see Clara. She hugged her tight.

“Il mio bambino. (My baby).” Gran said as she perked her lips.

“How are you gran?”

“Very happy that you are here.”

“Aren’t you happy to see us?” Seipati asked. Gran chuckled and hugged them.

“I see you guys almost every day. Don’t be jealous.”

“Where are the scones?” Sange asked making her way to the kitchen.

“Dare touch anything there, I am going to kill you.” Gran said and Sange just laughed. Seipati and Salizwa followed Sange.

“Do you have a basement?” Clara asked gran in a low tone.

“Yes. Why?” gran asked frowning.

“There is something I wanna check and relax I am not going to plant a bomb.” Grand laughed.

“That’s exactly what Adriane would. Fine, you will find us at the kitchen. The entrance is below the staircase.” Gran went to the kitchen while Clara went to the staircase.

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CLARA

This is just a wild guess. I don’t know which place I am going to if I don’t find her here. I open the door that leads to the basement. I descend the stairs which are dark but as soon as I step in each, lights light up. I get to the bottom and open the door. It’s very odd that this door is unlocked. I get inside and

look around. This place is nice and cozy. A safe haven for another person. I look around and see her lying the double bed in the corner. I go to the bed and shake her, seems like she is asleep. She wakes up and her eyes pop out when she sees me.

“Lara, what brings you here?” she asks while sitting up.

“You.” I say sitting next to her. “How long is this going to go on?”

“What are you talking about?” she asks frowning.

“Don’t tell me you have another serial killing personality which goes out in the night and kill people.” She chuckles.

“Empress is like that.”

“Why are you doing this to yourself?”

“He left me. Why should I carry on with my life when he took my heart and left with it?” she asks and tears start falling from her eyes. I don’t say anything, I just hug her tightly.

“But killing people won’t bring him back.”

“They deserve it.” I laugh and she also laugh.

“Stop killing people. You think he is going to come back while you are busy being a serial killer here?” she shrugs.

“Whatever. Why are you here?”

“Your crew knew that I will be the only one who will be able to find you.”

“And you did.”

“After one guess. I am really a genius.” She laughs.

“Five points for you.” I laugh.

“Now go bath so that you can see your loved ones. They really miss you.” She sniffs herself.

“I stink?”

“Of blood. Go.” She laughs and stands up. She heads to one of the cubicles here. I stand up and make the bed.

“I don’t know where you get the nerve to tell a whole empress that she stinks.” She shouts from the cubicle and I just laugh.

“I am a Thompson and Thompsons are brave.” I shout back and she laughs.

I finish showering and dry my body. I lotion it and wear black joggers with a black tank top and black sneakers. I then wear a hoody on top. I turn to look at Clara who has this uncomfortable look on her face.

“Now I am really scared of you and what you are wearing is not cool dude.” I laugh.

“I am still mourning my failed relationship dude so excuse my fashion sense.”

“Whatever. Let’s head up.” we both head upstairs and go to the kitchen where gran and my crew are chatting up a storm.

“Hi everyone.” They all turn quickly and rush to hug me. Gran is the one who hugs me last. When she finally breaks the hug she gives me the meanest slap ever. My eyes pop out. “Gran what was that for?”

“For being a spoiled brat and a self-centered bitch who only thinks for herself and doesn’t care about anyone else.” After that she rushes upstairs.

“You deserved that.” Sange says and heads out.

“Well we have been searching for you for a while now but we really didn’t think when we finally see you, what will we say to you. What I can say is that you’re selfish.” Salizwa says and also heads out and Seipati follows her.

“Well that went well.” Clara says while taking a muffin on the counter and eating it.

“Apologizing is not my thing. So what should I do?”

“You are rich for a reason. Bribe them with gifts because I know you won’t have emotional talks with them.” I chuckle.

“I will think about it.”

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Clara accompanies me to the mall and we go to Arthur Kaplan. Someone once said diamonds are a girl’s best friend. I am hoping they are going to table me out of this mess I am in. I guess I have to buy 5 sets of jewelry. One for gran, Salizwa, Sange, Seipati and mother. Of course I will also buy one for my ex mother in law and a bunch of flowers just to tell her that I still love her and I am thinking about her.

We get to the shop and we are greeted by a friendly assistant but she is showing a more friendly face to Clara. I guess my choice of clothing scares people. I view the catalogue that is given to me while Clara is looking at the engagement rings over the counter, weird of you may ask me. I choose a silver cubic zirconia pendant for Jenna. I am not trying to such up to her but I am trying to be nice.

I choose a 9 carat white gold amethyst blue topaz & 0.01ct diamond butterfly open heart pendant for Sange. A 9 carat white gold 6mm round tanzanite diamond pendant for Seipati. A 9 carat yellow gold 20mm diamond swirl slider pendant, 9 carat yellow gold 7x4mm oval cubic studs and a fossil lyric watch for gran. A 9 carat rose gold pink amethyst & diamond flower pendant, silver rose gold plated huggies and silver rose gold plated zirconia flower bracelet for mother. A silver cubic zirconia marquise open links bracelet 19cm for Salizwa because she doesn't like necklaces.

I then decide to buy watches for Silu's siblings and father. I then choose a fossil Carlie mini three-hand stainless steel watch for Siyamthanda. A Seiko presage watch for Simlethelwe and a Michel Herbelin Newport Chronograph watch. I then choose a Rado hyperchrome automatic watch for my father in law. I

decide that I am going to buy the set for my mother in law at American Swiss.

I go to the cashier and tell her all the jewelry I have chosen. To say she is shocked would be an understatement. She clears her throat and then she calls the shop assistant who welcomed us. She then inform her about my request and the assistant laughs.

“Did I say anything funny?” I ask frowning. They don’t answer. “Please get these stuff for me, put them in gift bags and label them in the way I am going to tell you. Now women I don’t have all day.” They jump up when I raise my voice and quickly head to the back. I go sit down on the couch and Clara sits next to me. “Want me to buy anything for you?”

“Yes.”

“So? Spill.” She giggles and covers her face with her hands.

“The new BMW 5 series sedan. I have signed a 3 year contract with the designer David Tale, so I am going to be in the country for a while. Meaning I am going to need a car.” I chuckle. What a way to ask for a car, a car worth a million rands at that.

“It’s Tlale like Clara not Tale.” She giggles again. “We will look into your request after I have talked with the women in my life.” She laughs.

“You sound like a polygamist right now.” I chuckle shaking my head.

“Ma’am your things are ready.” The shop assistant says. I stand up and head to the counter. I tell them to wrap the stuff and then write who they belong to. After doing as I have ordered

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I pay for the stuff. I would’ve tipped them but they looked down upon me. Clara and I head out and go to American Swiss.

I buy a sterling silver & freshwater pearl elegant drop pendant, sterling silver & freshwater pearl elegant drop earrings and an infinity pearl bracelet. I also order the cashier here to wrap the gift and label it. When I have paid, we head to Benmore flower shop where I buy a classic red rose vase because my mother in law is obsessed with roses. It’s already late so I figure we are going to crash the Ndaba family supper.

I buy an expensive bottle of whiskey for my father in law. He is not a huge fan of alcohol but he does drink, only the finest whiskey. I also buy wine for my mother in law, that one is a regular drinker of wine so I buy a box of her favorite wine.

I drive Clara to my apartment where we shower and change our clothes. I get dressed in a maroon mid-calf round neck long sleeve fall bodycon dress with white Versace safety pin pumps and a contrast barocco print silk foulard. I tied my foulard in a funny way but what did you expect? While Clara gets dressed in a lavender above knee round neck pleated bodycon spring dress with virtus naplak mid-heel mules. She is not wearing a scarf because there is no need.

One would swear we are going to an event or something but I just love dressing up when going to the Ndaba household. Some might be wondering how I have dressed like these when I hate shopping. Well I have a dress assistant. Yes a dress assistant. She always does shopping for me and she mostly buy Versace products because I love the brand. Sometimes she delivers the clothes here or at grans house.

When we are satisfied with our looks, by the way Clara put on some make-up on my face much to my disagreement, we lock the apartment and I drive us to the Ndaba household. I have the gate remote so I just open the gate and drive inside. I park in front of the garage and we climb off the car. Clara is carrying the gifts for everyone while I am carrying the flowers and the alcohol but only one of the wine bottles.

We head to the front door and ring the bell. After a few moments the door is opened by my mother in law. Right now I am freaking out because there is a possibility that Silu told them the reason why he called off the wedding.

“My baby.” She squeals and hugs me tight. Okay, that wasn’t the welcome I expected. I guess he didn’t tell them.

“Hi ma.” I wish I could hug her back but my hands are full. She finally breaks the hug and hug Clara who is smiling next to me.

“Come in. what a pleasant surprise.”

“Here you go.” I say handing her the wine and flowers. She claps her hands like a toddler receiving candy.

“Thank you so much.” She takes her gifts and she leads us inside the house. “You look so beautiful by the way.”

“Thank you.” Clara says still smiling. She leads us to the lounge where the whole family is seated, well Silu is not here but his family is. We exchange greetings and a few minutes later Silu’s mother tells us that the food is ready. We then head to the dining room. Everyone dishes for themselves while Clara looks lost. I just chuckle shaking my head. Silu’s mother prepared us with uphuthu and ujeqe. There is also sweet potato and amadumbe on the table. She went all out on the South African cuisine.

“Let me help you with that.” I say to Clara. I dish up a full spoon of uphuthu and a spoon of usu then a slice of ujeqe. I then take a piece of sweet potato and amadumbe and place it on her plate.

“How do I eat it?” she asks. I tell her to follow my lead and then I start eating my food. Well I am a huge fan of usu so I dished two spoons for myself. This tastes so good. If I was friends with the kitchen, I would ask for the recipe. She grabs her spoon and

starts eating like me. She chews and everyone stops and look at her for feedback. It's amusing really.

"How is it?" Silu's mother asks. Clara swallows and then smile.

"Different but delicious. What is the name of this dish?" she enquires.

"Just eat and forget about the name." I say and they all laugh.

"You both look very beautiful tonight." Siyamthanda says for the hundred time this evening and we just smile.

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Right now we are at the lounge drinking and chatting about anything and everything.

"Oww before I forget, I brought you guys something." I take the bag that Clara was carrying and give each and everyone their gift. I also give Silu's father the whiskey. They all hug me and thank me for their gifts.

"What's with all the screams and laughs? What are you guys celebrating?" a voice I wasn't prepared to hear asks. We all turn and look at the doorway. Holy fuck.

I quickly stand up and take my bag. I clearly wasn't expecting to see him. Not tonight. Not so soon. Clara gets the message and she also stands up, taking her handbag.

"Thank you so much for the dinner ma. We will surely visit you soon." She stands up and we exchange hugs.

"Do come back and you Clara, I am going to cook amadombolo for you." Clara smiles.

"I don't know what that is but I am sure it is going to be as delicious as tonight's meal was."

"Bye everyone." I say as I approach the doorway. "Hey Silungile." I smile looking at him and then head out. We get to the car and I drive us to my crew's house. I park the car on the drive way and Clara and I climb off the car. I open the front door and we both get inside. We find them in the lounge drinking beer and watching TV.

"I come bearing gifts." I say and then turn to look at my direction. "If you are waiting for an apology then I guess you

are going to wait until I am a born again which will never happen.” They laugh and come to hug me. They also hug Clara.

“So what did you buy?” Sange asks. I just hand her the gift bag. I go to the coffee table and take out a beer from the ice bucket. I open it with my ring and then take a huge sip. Damn it tastes good.

“Just like I remember it.” They laugh. I take my pumps and doek and then sit down. They also sit down. Clara takes one of the open beers and sip from it.

“Where are you guys coming from dressed like this?” Seipati asks.

“From the in laws. By the way the husband is back.” Clara replies.

“What a coincidence. You resurface and he comes back. Wow.” Sange says.

“It really is a coincidence.” I say shrugging.

--

We came back home in the early hours of the morning because we drank and chatted till late with the crew. When I got home I wrote a note for gran saying 'FYI YOU ARE STILL MY FAVORITE WOMAN IN THE WORLD AND I LOCE YOU'. I then placed it on her bedside table along with her gift. She knows that I don't know how to apologize so she will surely understand.

--

I wake up and check time. It's 12pm. I huff and get up from the bed. I don't have a hangover because I drank painkillers before I slept. That is my hangover cure. I go shower and then get dressed in a white short summer dress. I know that's not me but I am not planning on going anywhere, by the way it's already late. I wear my palazzo pool sliders and then go back to the bedroom. I find my bed already made. I take my phone and head downstairs. I go to the patio because my intention is to get fresh air before I go in search for something to eat.

"Finally her majesty has decided to grace us with her presence." Gran says and I chuckle. She is seated at the patio with mother and Jenna. It's a really rare sight to see Jenna at gran's house.

“How is everyone?” I ask sitting next to gran. They all answer in their own way.

“Thank you for saving my life Adriane.” Jenna says. I look at her. She looks better than the way she looked when I got to her suite back at the hotel.

“That’s what family is for. You fuck each other up but they are always there for you in times of need.” She nods with tears threatening to come out of her eyes. I internally roll my eyes. I am not a fan of tears. “I will be right back.” I place my phone on the table and go to my room. I take the gift bags and head back to the patio. I hand them to Jenna and mother.

“I should’ve known not to expect an apology from you.”
Mother says opening her gift.

“You know how she is.” gran says and they both laugh. Jenna and mother thank me for their gifts and I just smile. One of the maids bring me a plate of food with juice and I thank them. I start eating while the ladies continue chatting about whatever they were talking about before I joined them. I frown when I notice someone who is missing.

“Gran where is my twin?” she chuckles.

“She is meeting that designer that she is going to be working for, and don’t worry one of the drivers drove her there.” I exhale. “I am sure Tyrone would eat me alive if something were to happen to his grandchild while under my watch.” I laugh out loud because their beef is funny. They all give me strange looks.

“What is it?” I ask downing my juice.

“You hardly laugh, so when you laugh we wanna treasure it because it’s a beautiful sound.” Gran says and I just chuckle shaking my head.

“Weird.” Gran laughs.

--

We are seated at the dining table for a family dinner. Everyone is here, even Liyana and Likhona. Mother was very uncomfortable when Nkateko brought them but she is okay now, well pretending to be okay. He said Avuyile was afraid to come because she is scared of mother, that’s why she is not here.

Cole is here with Eve. Anathi is also here. Even my friends or crew or whatever you may call them. I consider them as family and I know that if I were to get married

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they would be my bridesmaids. Mother and gran are the ones who cooked. We are all gathered around the table. Clara says grace and we all start eating.

“Sorry to interrupt but Mr. Qhawe is here to see Miss Thompson.” One of the older maids says and we all turn to look at her. I know she is referring to me so I stand up. My crew also stands up and we head to the lobby. We find Q standing there with his two bodyguards.

“This better be good.” Salizwa says with her arms folded on her chest.

“Can we talk somewhere private?” Q says.

“Follow me.” I lead everyone to my study. We settle down with Q sitting opposite me. “How may I help you Q?” he takes out a file and a memory stick and hands it to me. “What am I supposed to do with this?”

“You are not stupid Empress, don’t start now.” One of the guards say and I chuckle. I take the memory stick and insert it on the computer in front of me. It only has video clips. I click on the first one.

“Before you play them, they are legit and everything in this file is legit. If you have any questions and concerns you know where to find me.” he stands up and heads out. His goons follow him. My crew rushes to my side, I am sure they wanna view what the memory stick has. I open the first video and it’s a video of Ty.

“Hi baby. I have no long speech prepared this time around. And before you ask, this is me, not Tyrone. I don’t know how to prove it but whatever.” I chuckle because that is so like him. “If you are watching this video, it means your birthday is in a week and you will be turning 25 then. The South African Mafia chair has always been yours. Qhawe was just keeping it warm for you. You are worthy of it. The papers in front of you are everything you need to know about the mafia and about being the boss.”

“Wow.” Sange says.

“Q won’t fight you in this. He knew about this from the beginning. You probably didn’t like his way of things because he can be very irrational and stupid. Now the chair is yours. Make me proud. The other clips contains everything you need to know, from territories, to enemies, to allies. Everything. Bye for now.” He winks and the clip ends.

“I was never ready.” Salizwa says sitting on the floor.

“You and me both bra.” Seipati says pouring whiskey in the glass and gulping it down.

I also was never ready.

It has been a few days since I have learned about the fact that the mafia chair is mine. In the other clips, Ty told me that I should call a meeting with all those who are under the mafia so that they know about the new change in leadership. He said not everyone will be happy about me taking over, so I should prepare renewal contracts.

The meeting is tonight and it is going to be held at an underground club which I didn't know of until recently. Ty said that's where all mafia meetings are held. It is situated at Kuruman. This mafia thing is a big deal for me. I have hardly slept these past few days preparing myself for this meeting. I am sure one of the men is going to do something to dare me so I must show them the real empress.

Silu has been contacting me but I haven't answered his calls replied to his texts. He must know not to mess with me and my feelings. Tyrone called me and we discussed the Silu issue. I laughed so hard when he told me that should I get back with Silu, he must pay the bride price for the second time because he wasted the Thompson time and Thompson time is very

precious. I love the relationship I have with Rone. We don't talk everyday but I know he has good advises and he is very wise.

I put on my bulletproofed bodysuit. You can never be too sure with these people. Someone might take a chance, so I should be prepared. I get dressed in black military straight fit cargo pants, print oversized tee and button front drop shoulder leather coat. I finish my look with black Nike air sneakers. I strap in my guns and then head downstairs.

"Be safe nana." Gran says and hugs me.

"I am the empress gran. I am undefeatable and unkillable."

"Keep telling yourself that and you might actually believe it."

Clara says and I hug her.

"I will be back before you know it." I head to the front and when I open it I find Silu standing on the other side. "Talk about bad timing." I say eyeing him.

"Are you going somewhere?" he asks.

"Yes."

“Boss we need to move.” Beast says opening the car door for me.

“When I am free, I will come to you.” I say to Silu and then head to the car. I climb inside and then we drive off.

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SILUNGILE

I messed up and I regret my reaction when Adriane official told me about her alter ego and other life. I know I was entitled to that reaction but I took it too far. I knew that there was a tracker in my body, so I went to my brother and asked him to disable it. After that I went to an island. I met a therapist there who opened my eyes to my current situation.

When I came back, I saw the headlines of the people who have been dying. Somehow I knew it was Adriane. She is like that. Even when we were still together, when we fought, she wouldn't throw tantrums or something, she would just do something drastic that shows how angry she is. I guess the killing was her way of therapy.

Adriane is never going to leave this life she is living because that's who she is and asking her to quit it would be very selfish of me. When I came back and saw her at home, I was glued to the floor and my vocab was empty. Firstly is because she was so beautiful and secondly is because I wasn't expecting to see her so soon.

I have been contacting her but she has been ignoring me. She has every right to react this way. When I drove to her house

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I thought I would catch her off guard but seems like she was really busy and seems like she was going to war. She didn't flinch when she saw me. She is really a female alpha. I just hope next time she will hear me out. I really love her and she is my forever.

--

We get to the club and find everyone seated around a huge long table. Even Q is here. I take a seat on a vacant chair and place my phone on the table. I understand phones are not allowed inside here but I am the boss, so they have to deal with. Q stands up.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are here together to celebrate and honor our new leader. She is very familiar with the way we do things. Many of you know her as The Empress who has single handily gone on a killing spree recently and eliminated some of our enemies. She is not a kid so we are to treat her with respect. Everyone, your new leader, Adriane Thompson.” They all stand up and clap their hands, some whistle. I go where Q is standing. He shakes my hand and then goes back to his seat. Everyone else settles down.

“The name is Empress. Your new queen and leader. I am not a kid so don’t treat me like one. I am a born leader so I won’t prove myself to anyone as to why you should all bow down to me. I need you and you need me. We are a family in this cartel. If there is anyone who feels like they won’t be comfortable with me leading them, stand up and leave now because if you stay and later on show your concerns or rebel, we will have a serious problem.” No one moves. I chuckle and extend my hand. Beast hands me a big file.

“This here contains your contracts. We are going to continue with the way you were doing before. I am not going to threaten anyone. What I will say is that if you don’t know about me, go to the streets and international cartels and ask who the

empress is. Guys distribute the contracts.” I hand them back to Beast and he distributes them with the help of my other guards.

“These are five year contracts which are renewable. Signing it means that you agree to have me as your leader. If you don’t, you are free to walk out the door but just know that life is going to be very hard for you the minute you walk out the door. You will be considered an enemy of this cartel and whenever I wake up on the wrong side of the bed and decide to eliminate enemies of the cartel, you will be one of the first.”

“How old are you again?” a lady who goes by the name of Dark Princess asks. She specializes in getting the mafia oil. She scouts mines and then buy them at a lower price from their rightful owners. If you are not willing, then she kills you. Her question gets a few chuckles and laughter. I remove my gun from my waist and shot her in the shoulder in a quick move. She screams and many gasp.

“Anyone who has a stupid question like hers?” silence. “Great then. Sign those contracts and return them this instant.” They all sign and Beast collects them. “Now let’s all move to the bar

and get drinks.” I head to the part of the club that has alcohol and my crew follows me. We get a corner table and then settle there. Other cartel members make their way in and sit on other tables.

“What should I get for us boss?” Beast asks.

“Get a Krug Grande Cuvee Brut, we are celebrating. Also have it delivered in every table. Then get us a bottle of Balvenie Speyside single-malt whisky.”

“That’s what I am talking about.” Sange says and they laugh while I chuckle shaking my head. Beast goes to the bar. A few moments later, the Krug is delivered to every table. They pour it to their wine glasses. I stand up and raise my glass to the air. They all stand up.

“To the new era.”

“TO THE NEW ERA!” They all chant after me. To the new era indeed. Let’s see what it has in store for me.

I finally have time to confront or rather meet with Silu. I haven't been ignoring him. It's just that he came back at a very busy time for me. Being a mafia queen is not easy. Now I have to watch my back and always wear bulletproofed clothes. It's rough. I have even increased security measures to all my family members. Clara didn't like this change one bit but she will be strong.

I get dressed in a black short denim skirt, a turtle neck

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leather jacket and a beret. I also wear boots that reach the knees. I have combed my hair and let it loose. I take my bag and head out. I find Clara and gran baking in the kitchen. Clara's eyes pop out when she sees me.

"Who are you and what have you done to my twin?" she shouts. I just laugh and gran also laugh.

"Love the temporary look?" I ask.

“You look like a model babes. You actually look like me.” I laugh again.

“I would love to stay and chit chat but I have a lot to do so I gotta bounce.” I head out and my guards drive me to Silu’s workplace.

--

I get there and head to his office. I don’t knock. I just barge in. he is sleeping on the desk. I bang the door and he jumps up. I just chuckle and go sit on the couch.

“Wow MaChiliza you look beautiful.”

“Thank you.” He stands up and comes to sit down next to me.

“I am glad that you are here.”

“Why were you sleeping on your desk?” I ask as I place my bag on the coffee table. I fold my legs and sit back. He swallows hard.

“I was catching up with work since I was away for such a long time.” I nod. He clears his throat. “I am sorry.” I look at him.

“For being a jerk and for being mean to you. I shouldn’t have

judged you. I took a decision controlled by the emotions and I took a very bad one. I know that I hurt you but I am sorry.”

“You are right. You did hurt my feelings.”

“And I am very sorry for that.” he takes my hands and plants kisses on them. “I was stupid and I was a fool and I was an idiot. You can call me by all the mean names because I deserve them.” I chuckle and look away. “Would you find it in your heart to forgive me?”

“I don’t know.”

“Baby please.” He takes my legs into his lap and takes off my boots. I look at him.

“Don’t even think about it.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about. I just wanna give you a foot massage.” He places my feet on his lap and start massaging them. Sly bastard. He always does this when I am angry at him. My feet are my weak spot and he uses that to his advantage to make me forgive him. I start to moan because it feels so good.

“Please baby.” He plants soft kisses on them and I know where this is going.

“Silungile no.”

“I like it when you pronounce my name baby.” He continues planting wet kisses on my feet and then goes up to my legs. It has been so long since I have had some action so I get wet so quick. “I love you.”

“What would you like baby?” he asks.

“A quarter hot chicken and fries with 2 mini loafs.” He repeats my order and then ends the call.

We are at my hotel. Well things got steamy back at his office. We ended up making love, two rounds to be specific. We couldn't get enough of each other so we went to my hotel. We are at the penthouse. Well we picked up where we left off at the office. I ended up forgiving him. Not because of the sex but because of the love I have for him.

I am not into bad boys or bad guys. I would never date a gangster. It's not double standards but it's who I am. Bad boys have issues that are unsolved and I don't have time to help them solve those issues. Silu is a good guy and I am complete with him. I wouldn't trade him for nothing because he is my soulmate. I just have to teach him how to protect himself in

case of emergency but other than that he is my forever and my love for him is infinity times infinity.

“So baby when are we getting married?” he asks while joining me on the bed.

“Rone said you should pay ilobolo for the second time just because you are the one who cancelled the wedding.” He burst out laughing. He has this very ugly laugh but it is one of the things that charms me and that I love about him. I smile.

“But that’s daylight robbery.” He says still laughing. “How does he even know about ilobolo?”

“Perks of staying with the Chiliza family that time when he was here in South Africa.” He chuckles.

“But for you my love, I would pay it over and over again.” Gosh I love this guy. I just get on top of him and kiss him.

“I love you sthandwa Sami.”

“I love you too phakade lami.” He kissed me back.

Epilogue

Today is the day I have been waiting for ever since I met my soulmate. I have been dreaming of a day like this ever since he proposed. Finally it's here and I am so excited. Seriously I am over the moon. I can't wait to walk down the aisle and finally say I do to the love of my life.

It has only be a few months after I was crowned leader of the cartel. To say no one dared me would be a lie. Dark Princess tried to avenge herself but I ended her. Seipati is the one who is in charge of her operation now. Another man tried to kidnap Clara. He wanted me to sign over my businesses and what not. What I can say is that he is Lucifer's bitch right now.

Mother has finally accepted that father is taking a second wife. He paid lobola for her two months back and they had a traditional wedding the following week. Mother and Avuyile are not best of friends but they do get along. Father decided to buy Avuyile a house in Stridom Park. It's a really beautiful and modern house. I don't know how dad does the whole polygamy thing but his wives are happy so I guess so far so good.

Cole also paid lobola for his girlfriend. His ex-wife tried to create drama on the lobola day but when you have the empress as a sister, everything always goes according to plan and bugs who wanna ruin the show, always get squashed. Sange is now in a serious relationship with Silindile. It was really a shock to all of us. They are very serious, they even moved together. I just wish them all the best.

“Stop day dreaming and sit straight so that I can fix your veil.” Gran says bringing me back from my thoughts. I smile. She fixes it.

“Thank you for everything you have done for me gran. I will always be grateful and indebted to you.” She looks up and I know she is trying to stop her tears. She sits down next to me and side hugs me.

“Your mother may have been my only child but you are my second and last born. Because of you I got to experience motherhood for the second time. You are honestly the best kid any parent could ever ask for. I love you baby and I know you will make me proud out there.” by now tears are falling freely

from her cheeks and she doesn't bother wiping them. I wipe them for her. She chuckles.

"I love you very much gran and you are one of the best things that have ever happened to me."

"I am sure wherever Tyler is at he is proud of the woman you have become and he is happy that both of you have always been there for each other through thick and thin." Tyrone says. He is standing at the door looking dashing in an emerald green tuxedo.

"Thank God for once you actually say something meaningful." Rone and I laugh.

"Why don't you just ask me out because I can see that you are in love with me?" Rone asks.

"Arg I spoke too soon." Gran says standing up and we laugh again. I also stand up and take my bouquet.

"You look beautiful Miss Thompson." Rone says and I smile.

"Thank You."

"Now let's go get you married." We head downstairs to where the wedding is happening. The wedding is at Mont Rochelle

Hotel & Vineyard. This place is really beautiful. Everything is perfect today.

We get to where the matrimonial garden ceremony is going to be held at Rose Garden. Fuck the setting is amazing. Everyone stands up as I walk down the aisle. Gran and Tyrone are the ones who are walking me down the aisle. I just chose them both so that the other one's ego won't be bruised in case I chose one of them.

I look at the altar and I see my prince charming standing there looking gorgeous in a black and white tuxedo and a black shirt. He is not wearing a tie. The coat is so beautiful and has crystal flower details which makes it stand out. I didn't know my fiancé had such taste in suits. I, on the other hand, am wearing an off shoulder mermaid dress with strapless neckline and Tit Adesa Agra white pumps. We get to the alter and I stand next to Silu who is looking at me with teary eyes.

"Damn you look hot. Like an angel really. Did you hurt yourself when you fell from the sky? Are your wings okay?" I burst out laughing and shake my head.

"No, you also look very handsome and eatable." He smirks.

"I try." I just giggle and look down.

The pastor starts the ceremony. We say our vows and exchange rings. The ceremony comes to an end when the pastor finally pronounces us husband and wife. We kiss and then go take pictures at the vineyard.

I may be a monster but God has provided me with a tamer. Every monster queen deserves a handsome prince. I know for sure that they are many people who are going to try and take him away from me but today I vow to protect him with my life. I love him infinity times infinity and for him I will give up all the Respect, Power and Money.

.....THE END.....

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